Asta’s award
Success for AusAID student
by Lindy Brophy

Cauliflowers are not a food usually associated with Bali, but they are a popular crop in the cooler mountain regions of the island and other parts of Indonesia.

And Balinese growers, just like Australian market gardeners, have problems with variations in the quality of their vegetables. Balinese graduate student Asta (Ida Ayu Astarini) is working on genetic variations for her PhD in plant biology, for the benefit of both Australian and Indonesian growers.

Her work so far has won Asta a prize at an international conference in Brisbane, which focused on harnessing the potential of horticulture in the Asia-Pacific region.

Asta’s poster, created with the help of her supervisors, Associate Professor Julie Plummer, Dr Guijun Yan and the WA Department of Agriculture’s Rachel Lancaster, highlighted the genetic diversity of cauliflowers in Indonesia. The third prize in the poster competition went to Tikik Kustiati, another student from Plant Biology.

Asta first came to UWA as an AusAID student in 1994, to do a Masters in horticulture, after completing her undergraduate degree at Bogor Agricultural University in West Java.

She did so well, completing a project on Boronia breeding with A/Professor Plummer and Dr Yan, that she returned, with another AusAID scholarship, to work on a PhD.

Both AusAID and the Indonesian Government require a sponsored student to return to their homeland for at least two years, to share the fruits of their studies in Australia.

“I lectured at Udayana University in Denpasar, Bali’s state university,” Asta said. “Then, I was lucky enough for AusAID to grant me another scholarship, so I came back in 2002 and I hope to finish my PhD next year.”

Meanwhile Asta has been promoting the AusAID scheme and UWA in Indonesia and she will go to Korea to do the same later this month, on a Mary Janet Lindsay memorial travel grant.

“Thanks to AusAID, Asta was able to go back to Indonesia to do some work on cauliflowers there that complemented her field work here, Associate Professor Plummer said.

She said that both UWA and the Department of Agriculture were keen to cement links between Australia and Indonesia in the field of plant biology.

“Some people are surprised that the Indonesians grow cauliflowers, but they belong to the same family, Brassica, as the better known Asian vegetables, bok choy and pak choy and of course broccoli, and even canola,” A/Professor Plummer said. “So any research in this area can be of great benefit to both countries.”

Asta’s research is trying to find out why hybrid cauliflowers (the type grown by most WA market gardeners) are showing a lot of variation. A hybrid crop should grow and develop uniformly, but WA growers are losing about 10 per cent of their crop each year to plants with abnormalities. They are also maturing at different rates, which means the growers can’t use

Continued on page 2
machinery to harvest the caulies. They have to pick them manually every three days.

“We export about $20 million worth of cauliflowers every year,” A/Professor Plummer said. “But they have to be at exactly the right stage of maturity. So variations are causing loss on export income as well as making the industry very labour-intensive.”

Asta is using a genetic marker to try to identify the problem, which occurs in cauliflower crops around the world.

“The literature says it is because the hybrids are self inbred plants,” Asta said. “But, although this is the case with broccoli, I have found it is not necessarily so with cauliflowers. I am looking at morphological traits, such as seed weight and seedling height, to try to link them with the molecular markers.

“I have finished my field trials and found some answers, but there is still some laboratory work to be done before I can write it up,” she said.

Asta will return to Udayana University when she completes her research. Both she and A/Professor Plummer plan to continue collaborations and to extend them with future AusAID students.

The creation of the Historical Encyclopedia of Western Australia (HEWA) is at the half-way mark.

But while it will be 18 months before the book is published, the work in progress can be viewed on HEWA’s website.

UWA Press hopes people who regularly visit the website will be inspired to buy a copy of the encyclopedia when it is launched.

Visit www.encyclopedia.uwapress.uwa.edu.au to read the latest entries. Be sure to spell encyclopedia WITHOUT the a (as in encyclopaedia). The best entries in the competition, announced last month, to write your personal history, will also be published on the website.

Erratum

The last issue of UWAnews featured a story about a new drug to help boys with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. The story quoted a cost of $210,000 a year for the drug, Remicade. It should have been $20,000.
Student project fulfils a dream

Six simple words from a paraplegic set engineering student Darren Lomman on a course that may well become his life’s work.

“I wish I could ride again,” said Shane Thompson, as he farewelled Darren last year. The pair had just met and, as Darren was riding a motorbike and Shane had been a national motorcycle champion and ran a motorcycle shop before his accident, they naturally talked about motorbikes.

“His passion for motorcycles and his desire to ride again were so clear to me that my project was born immediately,” said Darren, a final year mechanical engineering student.

“I wanted to design and build him a bike that would bring back that pleasure. I had no idea how hard it would be, how long it would take and how many skills I would have to learn to make that dream a reality,” he said.

Darren’s project has taught him about design, machining, welding, pneumatics and electronic programming, as well as the medical side of the project, and management, marketing and funding. He even did three months work experience in a machining shop, so he could learn to make his own parts and fittings.

“Motorcycles have been modified to suit riders with disabilities before but, because everybody’s disability is different, no one solution will suit everybody. Modifications often need to be custom engineered to meet individual needs,” he said.

Darren is determined to keep his bike as close as possible to a conventional bike. “What Shane and other riders with disabilities want is that feeling of freedom, of leaning into the corners, that only a motorbike on two wheels can create,” he said. “So I’ve steered right away from sidecars or trikes for stability and, instead, gone for retractable stabilisers, a cross between kids’ trainer wheels on a bicycle and landing gear on a plane.

“It’s also important that the bike looks like a conventional bike,” he said.

The four main modifications a paraplegic needs in a motorcycle are braking, gear changing, stability and ergonomics.

Darren’s bike has changed operation of the rear brake from a right foot activated lever to a thumb-controlled lever on the handlebar. Gear changes, normally done via a left foot lever, are hand-controlled, the original foot linkage replaced with a pneumatic ram. The ram movement is controlled by a solenoid valve, connected to two buttons on the handlebar: one changes to a high gear, the other changes to a lower gear.

Darren Lomman takes Shane Thompson for a spin in his wheelchair, taking the corners as they would on a motorbike.
Beyond election results

As the dust settles after the Federal election, we will seek reassurance that despite the introduction of the Government’s wide ranging reform package, there should be no diminution of emphasis on Universities and the major role they play in sustaining Australia’s intellectual capital and research capacity.

For our part, we should recognise the certainty that the conclusion of the election brings. Importantly our planning, preparation and implementation of the Nelson initiatives and our response can now move ahead.

We along with all other Australian universities must now knuckle down to the realities of the new environment that we operate in – essentially a more market-driven framework featuring greater flexibility of fees arrangements. The issue of growth and further allocations of new Commonwealth-supported student places remains high on UWA’s agenda.

Also high on our agenda is the need for the Government to follow through on the Backing Australia’s Future and Backing Australia’s Ability initiatives – a process which was far from finished when the 2004 election was called.

Two critical issues need to be addressed in the short term. The first is the Government commitment to a review of indexation arrangements. This must move ahead quickly to avoid cutting further into the real value of Government grants and additional investment from other Government initiatives. We simply need to receive more funding per student.

The second relates to streamlining the regulatory and reporting burden to ensure that, as far as possible, universities put their resources into teaching, research and serving the community, rather than into ‘red tape’.

It has also been made clear by the Coalition that technical and vocational education will be a major focus of the new government over the coming three years. As a consequence the articulation between technical and vocational education and University education will be an important issue.

We must work to ensure that decision makers within Government – as well as business, industry and commerce – do not lose sight of the primary role that Universities play in the advancement of the nation’s economic and social well being.

Alan Robson
Vice-Chancellor

Pushing rice uphill

UWA’s engineering students have again been successful in the national Warman Design and Build Competition.

The team of undergraduate engineers was the top Australian team and was just beaten to first place by Auckland University. In 2002 and 2003, UWA won the finals and brought home the Warman trophy.

Teams from 17 universities from around Australia and from New Zealand and Singapore compete annually in the competition.

The task this year was create a mechanism for efficient energy transfer from a standard rig to a vehicle. Head of the School of Mechanical Engineering, Associate Professor Brett Kirk, explained that a weight was raised to a certain height and the students had to use the energy generated by its drop to power a small vehicle carrying a load (a three-kilogram bag of rice) as far up a slope as possible.

“Congratulations to everybody involved in this fantastic performance,” A/Professor Kirk said. “Although we’re not that pleased to give up the trophy, we can still claim to be the best performing Australian university, and can develop a healthy international rivalry into the future.”

The UWA team with their runner-up vehicle
Care for the community starts with children

Many adults who require the help of a social worker are experiencing problems resulting from a childhood trauma.

Poverty, violence, separation from family, inadequate education or health care for children all contribute to the social problems of adults and their community.

It is obvious to social workers that care of vulnerable children should be one of society’s first responsibilities.

The discipline of Social Work and Social Policy, in the School of Social and Cultural Studies, has brought together its research and work in the community, to form the discipline’s first research and training centre, the proposed Centre for Research, Policy and Practice for Vulnerable Children and Families.

Dr Maria Harries, senior lecturer in social work, said the members of the small department felt a need to consolidate their work, and provide the capacity to promote a better understanding of, and improve practice in, building resilience in vulnerable children and families.

“We looked at the work we were all doing, ranging from research into the responsibilities of ‘government as parent’, to child abuse, racism, foster care, multiculturalism, youth suicide, indigenous families and poverty, and the overarching theme was vulnerability of children and families,” Dr Harries said.

She and the Chair of Social Work, Associate Professor Mike Clare, along with the other members of the Discipline Research Management Group, have done the groundwork to establish the proposed centre.

Their proposal pointed out that the discipline was attracting an escalating number of approaches to undertake collaborative scholarly and applied research. “Without the creation of a dedicated infrastructure and the economies of scale that accrue from coordination, it is impossible for us to take sufficient advantage of these and other related opportunities,” Dr Harries said.

Members of the Centre addressed the Senate inquiry into children in institutional care which has just released its report on Australian who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children. “The outcomes of this inquiry testify to the critical need for interdisciplinary research and tertiary level courses which focus on the related issues of vulnerability and traumatic early-life experience in children, the long-term consequences of these and the development of policies for all Australians,” she said.

Dr Harries, like other members of the Centre and the discipline, actively participates in social welfare work outside the University.

Hers has been a life of community service.

“My parents met on a boat to Cairo, on their way to join an aid organisation in Africa. My mother was a nurse, my father was a doctor. My early years were spent in a leper colony in Africa, so I suppose it’s not surprising that my life and career have taken this path,” she said.

The Centre for Vulnerable Children has the support of the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, the establishment in which Professor Fiona Stanley was instrumental. The WA Department for Community Development have seconded Susan Diamond on half-time for two years, to direct the Centre. She is also a PhD student of Dr Harries’.

After the initial set-up phase, the annual costs of the Centre are likely to be covered by consultancy surpluses.

The Centre will focus on strategic research and consultancy aimed at informing and integrating policy and practice with and for vulnerable children and families.

It aims to encourage collaborative research within the University and with external agencies and other universities.
ALLIES lead the way

The Ally network, a watchdog for an inclusive environment at UWA, is celebrating some milestones.

When the Ally movement was formed more than two years, just 15 staff members attended the first training session, to learn more about different sexual orientations and to be more aware of sexual negativity on campus.

Now the number of Allies has swelled by 100, to more than 115 staff members, as well as students. While the Rainbow report, released at the time of the launch of the Ally network, showed there were still some prejudices on campus, Equity and Diversity Manager Beverley Hill says that inclusiveness of sexual differences is now much more in people’s thinking. The network has helped others to see the omissions in curriculum and social life on campus.

“This program is a national first,” Ms Hill said. “The University of Queensland is now setting out to emulate the network, and Dr Alan Goody is going there soon to help them set it up.”

The original advocates of the network, Dr Goody and Jen de Vries, have delivered papers on the program at the HERDSA conference. Ms Hill and diversity colleague Malcolm Fialho have presented it at an equity and diversity conference in Tasmania.

Including people of different sexual orientation is also the subject of post-graduate research. A student from an eastern states university is looking at how leadership is manifested in culture change, and using UWA and it’s Ally network to demonstrate how to approach culture change.

Another milestone for the program is the graduation last month of an intersex student, Chris Somers xxy. The student graduated with a Master of Education, and the degree certificate recognises the student’s sexual status (having both male and female chromosomes).

“Clearly, honorifics of Mr or Ms don’t work for this student,” Ms Hill said. “We are delighted that, for the first time, the University has recognised the status of an intersex student and allowed it to appear on the degree.”

The University’s commitment to the program will be further shown to the community in the flying of the rainbow flag from UWA’s official flagpole this week, the final week of Pride month.

“Pride month is not just about people who identify as having a sexual orientation other than heterosexuality,” Ms Hill said. “It’s an opportunity for the community to show their support for these people and to celebrate difference.”

UWA staff will once again march under the University’s banner in the Pride Parade on Saturday October 23. Anybody wanting to join the group or buy a T-shirt to wear on that weekend, contact Dr Goody at Organisational and Staff Development Services (6488 2603 or agoody@csd.uwa.edu.au).

“The program is about dealing with attitudes and beliefs,” Ms Hill said. “We are not here to manipulate people’s beliefs, but , if they are contrary to the University’s policies, we don’t want them to be manifested in the workplace and we want to help people to come to terms with that.”

* Please see notice in info liftout calling for nominations for equity and diversity advisers.

Enriching organic

Just as organic agriculture is about enriching the soil naturally to get the best results, so students of the discipline are being enriched across the world, to produce the best organic agricultural scientists.

Students from four Australian universities, including UWA, and four European universities are part-way through a three-year pilot exchange program, focusing on all aspects of agriculture, from paddock to plate.

Learning Through Exchange – Agriculture, Food Systems and Environment (LEAFSE) is, over three years, supervising group exchanges of staff and up to 72 Masters level students, to combine the best aspects of Australian and European agricultural experience.

Professor Lyn Abbott, Head of the School of Earth and Geographical Sciences, is the LEAFSE coordinator and supervisor for UWA.

“It has been a wonderful learning experience for both the group from Europe who spent a semester here, and for our three students who went to Wales, Denmark and the Netherlands,” Professor Abbott said.

“The students have broadened their vision, seen the other side. The European students left here with a sound knowledge of an environment that, six months earlier, had been foreign to them,” she said.

“They looked at how to maintain nutrients in an organic system, an issue that is world-wide. And they learned that what is appropriate for one environment is not necessarily going to work in another.”

The visiting students, from Denmark, the Netherlands, Wales and Germany, worked as a group on their organic...
students with exchange

project, with an organic farmer in Moora. They also studied other agriculture units of their choice at UWA.

Staff from the four participating Australian universities, UWA, Western Sydney, New England and Queensland, have formed new links, and the framework for future and on-going student and staff exchanges with the European universities is in place.

“There is a bid in for a Collaborative Research Centre, based at the NSW Department of Agriculture, and, if we are successful with this, it will help us to maintain these valuable relationships,” Professor Abbott said.

The bid is for a CRC for organic food and farming technologies, with the aim of “enriching soil, food, people and communities.”

Joann Johnston, one of UWA’s exchange group, spent a semester at Aberystwyth University, Wales. She has a natural resources management background and was interested in getting the Welsh and

English perspective on organic farming. “Organic agriculture there involves a much bigger percentage of farmers than it does in Australia,” Joann said. “And I think the farmers have more support than they do here.”

Joann’s project is looking at water use efficiency in horticulture and how organic methods can help. “Our lack of water puts constraints on organic agriculture in Australia. It certainly has an effect on farmers who want to use herbicides to get rid of water-guzzling weeds,” she said. “It is fascinating and important to learn how agriculture in other environments operate.”

The other UWA students, Jessica Scott and Andrea Hills, went to Denmark’s Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University and Wageningen University in The Netherlands, respectively.

Eike Luedeling, from Germany, reflected on his experiences in WA with a warning about soil salinity. “My most important impression of WA agriculture is that natural resources are rapidly declining in the rural areas with problems such as salinity and soil erosion taking away huge proportions of the productive area,” he said.

“Tremendous costs will arise from taxpayers in the decades to come and only vigorous efforts can prevent the worst from happening. It is time to act now, and future generations of Western Australians will judge our generation by how successfully we preserve our common resources.”

It is not a revelation for Australians, but the situation provided a new perspective for the student from the University of Kassel.

While the students who took part in the first year of exchange all agreed on its value, Professor Abbott said she was surprised at how difficult it was to fill the UWA places.

“I guess it’s because the students have to commit to doing a Masters and there are funding issues for them,” she said.

But as a pilot program to establish an effective framework for future international postgraduate exchange, it has added a new dimension to our international program.
Kane Daly might be a champion boxer but it’s more style than aggression that has won him his second state title.

He is always happy when the opponent he’s knocked out finally gets up off the canvas. “I don’t really like knocking them out,” said the 20-year old electrical apprentice.

Kane took a break from working with the electrical team from the Maintenance Workshop, installing air-conditioning in the Office of Facilities Management, to talk about defending his title early this month.

“I won it last year, but I was a bit nervous going into this fight because I hadn’t had a fight for about eight months, as my coach has been away,” he said.

“I didn’t do too well in the first two rounds because I was nervous, but then I settled down in the next few rounds and knocked out my opponent in round six.”

Kane is a middle weight boxer and has been boxing for about six years, starting as a teenager with his local Police and Citizens’ Youth Club in Gosnells. His family moved to Mandurah two years ago and he now trains there and also plays football for a local team.

“I train about three nights a week, more if a fight’s coming up. I really recommend it for a fitness training.

He says he was concussed once after a fight but hasn’t suffered any other major injuries. He was still sporting the remnants of a black eye when he was back at work on campus two days after winning the state championship.

“I’m not all that interested in competition. If I was ever good enough, I’d like to go to the Olympics, but, for now, I really like my job and I want to concentrate on my apprenticeship,” he said.

UWA athletes have had a huge month.

They won the National Indigenous Tertiary Student Games; came third overall in the national University Games, hosted by UWA; and law student Claire McLean won a silver medal in cycling at the Paralympics in Athens.

Since joining the national competition, our Indigenous athletes have won the national meet three times (2001, 2002 and 2004) and come second twice. UWA students also won five medals for individual performances.

The medal for netball (female) went the Dezreena Hoelker; for netball (male) to Blaze Kwaymullina; volleyball (female) was won by Deja Anne Clanton; and for touch football (female) by Shannon Burgess, who also won the award for overall best female competitor at the games.

David Phua from UWA Sport and Recreation reports that UWA finished third in the University Games behind the universities of Melbourne and Sydney.

“When you consider how many students they have to choose from, and the fact that their amenities fees are higher than UWA’s, so they can afford to send bigger teams, it’s a big deal for us come third,” he said.

UWA fielded a team of 330 competitors, about twice as many as the number who compete at away games. The students were runners-up for the Doug Ellis trophy, awarded for participation per capita.

To cap off the month, UWA cyclist Claire McLean recorded the fastest time in the women’s LC 1-4&CP 3/4 bicycle time trial, but was relegated to second place when the extent of the competitors’ disabilities were taken into account.

Dezreena Hoelker (captain) and Ashley Mesch with the Indigenous Games winners’ trophy.
It wasn’t just Hamlet who was fascinated by clouds.

Poets, painters and photographers have been capturing the elusive images for centuries, and the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery has brought together an exhibition of visual interpretations, Clouded Over, which opened last weekend.

Curator Janice Baker said she has been observing the cloud-scapes created by Western Australian artists and imagined how good it would be to hang a selection of these Australian skies alongside image of clouds by artists from different times and places.

She has put together an exhibition that spans 500 years of art.

“We have an exquisite group of 17th century Dutch paintings, a selection of 19th century prints by English landscape artists, including Turner and Constable, and a magnificent oil on canvas by French surrealist artist Rene Magritte,” Janice said.

The Magritte has been lent to UWA from the Kerry Stokes collection, along with other pieces from this collection, and from the Holmes a Court, Wesfarmers Arts and the Art Gallery of WA collections.

“We are fortunate to have outstanding art collection in WA, and generous owners,” Janice said.

Alongside these classics are paintings by two UWA artists, Jon Tarry and Penny Bovell from the Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Visual Arts; and photographs by Frank Hurley, who accompanied Mawson on his Antarctic expedition in 1911.

Australian print maker Lesley Duxbury has created a cloud image by going to the exact spot on London’s Hampstead Heath where John Constable had painted his landscape (including clouds) 180 years before.

Constable made his famous cloud studies on August 1, 1822. Lesley Duxbury made hers on August 1, 2002.

The Art Gallery of Western Australia has lent the Lawrence Wilson a portfolio of Constable prints, so visitors can compare the images.

Photographer Rosemary Laing disrupts the romantic narrative of clouds with her disturbing series, Cloud Bride.

Another Australian, Brian Blanchflower, has some highly coloured interpretations of the London sky, painted when he was living there in 1970. Penny Bovell’s images also capture an amazing range of colour in the skies over Western Australia.

Janice has put together a fascinating series of free Friday lunchtime talks during the exhibition, which runs until December 19.

On Friday October 29, Brian Kowald, a weather observer from the Bureau of Meteorology will talk about how clouds are formed, what each cloud is telling us about the atmosphere and will share his stories about some of the extraordinary clouds he has observed.

On Friday November 12, Lesley Duxbury will consider John Constable’s love of clouds and the cloud paintings she has studied and emulated on Hampstead Heath.

Dr Kevin Judd, from the School of Mathematics and Statistics will explore the complex patterns of clouds and what these patterns tell us about the nature of reality and our ability to forecast, on Friday November 19.

UWA artist Penny Bovell, who has only painted the sky for many years, will talk about the paradox of imaging the sky, on Friday November 26.

All talks start at 1pm in the Gallery.
A new portfolio of scholarships for commencing students will make UWA an even more desirable destination for school leavers next year.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alan Robson, has written to every school in the state detailing the UWA Fogarty Foundation Scholarships Program and the new UWA SWANS Scheme (Scholarships to Widen Access for New Students), designed to complement the Commonwealth Learning Scholarships, which were introduced by the Government this year.

The UWA Fogarty Foundation City and Regional Scholarships will be awarded for the first time in 2005.

In his letter, Professor Robson said the University had a long tradition of promoting, recognising and rewarding merit and excellence within the community, and a strong commitment to equity and access for all students.

The University will offer 200 SWANS Scheme scholarships next year, valued at $2,000 per annum, for the normal minimum full-time duration of the student’s chosen course.

They are to assist students from low socio-economic and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. Academic achievement and past educational disadvantage factors will be considered in the awarding of scholarships.

Two types of scholarship will be available: a partial fee waiver scholarship, where funds will be exempt from Social Security income tests; and a cash payment scholarship, where funds will be included as income in Social Security means-tested payments.

To be eligible, students must be an Australian or New Zealand citizen or hold an Australian permanent visa; enrolled at UWA in the first year of their first degree; and demonstrate financial hardship.

Students can apply for both a SWANS Scheme scholarship and a Commonwealth Learning Scholarship, but, SWANS award holders are eligible for no more than $7,000 per annum. Under the Commonwealth scheme, a student could receive up to $6,000 per annum. So a SWANS scholarship, in addition, would be for a maximum of $1,000 per annum.

The Fogarty scholarships will be awarded to four students from regional areas and will cover HECS fees, ancillary costs and accommodation costs, valued at approximately $50,000 to $80,000 or up to about $13,000 per annum.

Ten city scholarships are available for students from the metropolitan area and their scholarships will cover HECS and $1,000 towards ancillary costs, around $5,000 per annum, or between $20,000 and $30,000 over a complete degree course.

These scholarships are for students who show significant academic potential together with a strong sense of community involvement and responsibility.

The Vice-Chancellor’s Awards of Distinction, Group of Eight scholarships UWA Diversity and Merit Awards and the UWA Excellence Awards Program will all continue to be offered under the UWA Fogarty Foundation Scholarships Program and awarded alongside the new awards.

More information about scholarships is available at:
http://www.scholarships.uwa.edu.au/home/undergrad

The University is helping students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds through The Smith Family.

UWA has recently become a member of the Guardian Club of the charitable institution. These members pay $1,500 a year for three years, to help fund the infrastructure for The Smith Family’s Learning for Life education and support scholarships.

Dr Norman Ashton, a former senior lecturer at UWA, now retired, is a volunteer with The Smith Family’s learning for life program. He said there were 1,600 students in WA holding learning for life scholarships, of whom 44 were attending university.

Eight of these students are enrolled at UWA.

“In the years to come, the number of tertiary Smith Family scholarship holders in WA will increase dramatically, as more of the current students move through their primary and secondary schooling and go on to university,” Dr Ashton said.

“UWA’s membership of the guardian club assists in no small way to provide support for students who are currently at UWA and for those who may one day study here.”

The Smith Family, active in the eastern states for many years, began its work in WA in 2001. The charity’s general manager operations (WA) David Ansell, visited the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Robson, to take delivery of UWA’s first cheque.
Question: what topic would require the united expertise of a Tasmanian whale expert, the former director of Adelaide zoo and a philosopher from The University of Western Australia? Answer: the ethics of research on large marine mammals.

Andrew Brennan, professor of philosophy at UWA and for many years chair of the university’s Animal Ethics Committee, admitted that he was excited when, in 2001, Nick Gales from the Australian Antarctic Division approached him to collaborate on writing an article dealing with the ethics of marine mammal research, to appear in a new comprehensive CSIRO publication entitled *Marine Mammals: Fisheries, Tourism and Management Issues*.

“My first thought,” Professor Brennan said, “was that maybe I should take a trip to the Antarctic myself to see just how research on these large animals was carried out in the wild. As it turned out, though, I had to be content with Nick’s occasional descriptions of the weather in his emails from Aurora Australis, as we argued to and fro about the structure and the details of the piece.”

A veterinarian’s perspective was added by the third co-author, former director of Adelaide Zoo, Robert Barker.

Professor Brennan explained that writing the article was a very much a pioneering venture. “Codes of conduct for animal researchers often assume that research activities take place in a laboratory and are easily monitored,” he said. “But seals, whales and other large mammals are usually studied in far from controlled environments. Moreover, they are big, dangerous and easily disturbed. For example, even the attempt to photograph the tails of whales for tracking and identification purposes can involve high levels of disturbance and disrupt normal behaviours.

“When it comes to taking physiological measurements, or to attaching or implanting tracking devices, the problems – like the animals themselves – are immense. Subduing animals like seals and sea lions can be dangerous for researchers and animals alike, and there is enormous controversy over whether chemical or physical methods are better. Two big problems are that, first, the work is carried out far offshore, and, second, permission to undertake it is usually granted by ethics committees that may entirely lack the expertise to know the hazards or impositions to which the animals are likely to be exposed. We felt at times that we were trying to make the rules up from scratch.”

The three authors’ recommendations were twofold. First, they proposed that the major professional societies for marine scientists should collaborate to produce internationally agreed protocols for the training of marine scientists, and establish uniform humane standards for tagging, marking, and subduing of animals, the invasiveness of procedures and the levels of permitted disturbance.

Second, they proposed a series of procedures to ensure that animal ethics committees in universities and research institutes were better informed about the nature of research with marine mammals, and a set of guidelines to be followed in discussion and approval of such research.

“The result was at least a sketch of a credible answer to the problems we had outlined,” Professor Brennan said. “And it’s great that the article now appears as a chapter in a prize-winning volume.”

The volume was awarded the prestigious Whitley prize, from the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales, for significant scientific publication at a ceremony in Sydney last month.

Our second annual *Walk in the Park* will be held at Matilda Bay on Friday November 5. Watch out for more details and RSVP form in the next issue of UWA News.
Challenges for research training

Higher degree by research training is one of the priority areas of UWA, with growth in volume and quality projected over the next few years. This makes it a very exciting area for work, with lots of opportunities for those who have good ideas about improvements in research training.

The University conducted its first ever Strategic Review of Postgraduate Research in 2003, receiving more than 80 submissions and resulting in more than 50 recommendations from a panel of national and international experts. The thrust of these recommendations can be broadly summed up in three general principles: the promotion of pockets of best practice across the whole university; the introduction of more support for students and supervisors; and the use of evidence-based metrics to measure performance.

UWA is rich in excellent supervisors and stimulating research environments. Many Schools offer wonderful research development opportunities, with regular seminars by their research students, conferences and symposia (often organised by the students themselves), advisory panels, travel grants, and project management and leadership development opportunities.

Students are supported through teaching internships or are given teaching opportunities within some Schools; many are encouraged to publish throughout their candidature; and some are involved with CRCs, international research networks, or co-tutelle arrangements spending part of their candidature overseas. Many Schools have well-developed ‘exit procedures’, facilitating the students’ submission, completion and subsequent career development. A series of Graduate Research Coordinator Forums has been designed to help propagate such initiatives across the whole university.

It is very pleasing to see that the University responded rapidly to backing growth in research training by announcing last year an 18 per cent growth in scholarships per year over a three year period, taking the number of University Postgraduate Awards (UPAs) from 49 up to 81 in 2006. In addition, these UPAs are now being offered to Faculties as twice as many half-UPAs, allowing Faculties to match as many of them as desired and creating the opportunity for up to 162 full university-based scholarships by 2006.

To promote international research students, the University has in addition created up to 20 new Scholarships for International Research Fees (SIRFs) for 2005, matching the Federal Government’s IPRS scheme and promoting internationalisation and high quality research training. The SIRF scheme will grow over the next four years, leading to a substantial growth in international research students at UWA and feeding back into more IPRS awards for the University with successful completions.

Scholarships are not the only thing that was supported through the budget. Ten Whitfeld Fellowships were created for 2004 to reward timely completions, and a series of prizes established to reward high quality publications from research students. The completion scholarship scheme has been expanded in quantity and in eligibility criteria, giving more than 30 students in 2004 the opportunity to bring their theses to completion. So far, all these students are on target to complete within the 20-week period of the scholarship.

UWA currently has 1750 higher degree by research students. So far this year we have successfully completed 146 PhDs and 28 Masters. There are a further 135 theses under examination. Our completion rate for PhDs is about 60 per cent, with an average of 3.9 completions per 10 academic staff and a mean time to completion of 4.16 years. With 11 per cent of our student population being research students, we are just behind, and second only to, the ANU in defining ourselves as a research training university. UWA’s aim is to grow its higher degree by research student population to 18 per cent of the total student population; this will be achieved through the support and efforts of the academic staff, with funding directed to expansion, enhancement and development in research training.

It’s an exciting time for both students and their supervisors. With changes in the way research is being conducted both nationally and internationally through the development of research networks and e-research initiatives, and with greater emphasis worldwide on skills development and researcher mobility, we have the opportunity to redesign graduate student training and research supervisor training. With UWA being at the forefront of Australia’s universities engaged in best practice research training, we can take a leadership role in these developments.
Equity and Diversity Advisers 2005–2007

The Vice-Chancellor is calling for nominations from amongst all staff to serve as Equity and Diversity Advisers 2005–2007.

Advisers play a dual role of being a point of preliminary advice and assistance for staff and students who are seeking information about equity and diversity policies, or who have a matter of concern they wish to clarify.

Advisers will also be an agent at the local level who assists in identifying gaps in policy, service provision and operational processes that may serve to limit opportunities for access and success to a wider representation of staff and students. It is expected that the Adviser will take a proactive role within their faculty/division or section to raise equity and diversity matters for discussion.

The selection criteria of the role of Adviser are:

* good communication and interpersonal skills and the ability to relate to a diverse range of staff and students;
* the capacity to be a credible advocate of equity and diversity;
* a demonstrated commitment to the principles of equity and diversity;
* commitment to promoting and actively participating in the Equity and Diversity Adviser scheme;
* the capacity to be a credible advocate of equity and diversity matters; and
* commitment to engage in training and further development in these areas.

Comprehensive training will be provided to successful nominees.

Information about the Equity and Diversity Adviser scheme and the nomination process can be found at www.equity.uwa.edu.au go to Advice and Assistance.


Contact Beverley Hill, Manager Equity and Diversity 6488 3791 bhill@admin.uwa.edu.au for more information.

Welcome to the following new staff who joined the University in August:

- Marilyn Bacus, administrative assistant, Psychology; Elaine Barnes, administrative assistant, Human Resources; Dr Amanda Blackmore, research officer, Social and Cultural Studies; Duncan Blond, functional analyst, Student Services; Dr Matthias Boer, research fellow, Plant Biology; Laurel Collin, graduate research assistant, Human Resources; Adrian Federici, human resource assistant, Human Resources; Kerry Forrester, project officer, Finance and Resources; Office: Norene Garry, librarian I, Library; Rosamund Gatt, assistant (accounts), Water Research; Alan Gent, education manager, Physics; Lydia Glavinas, assistant (laboratory), WAIMR; Amanda Halls, mobility officer, Finance and Resources Office; Karen Howley, PIAR appointment, PIAR; Bree Hutchinson, PIAR appointment, PIAR; Rosalie Ivory, records officer, Law; Anthony Jenkins, project officer, Primary, Aboriginal and Rural Health Care; Tanya Maisey, dental clinic assistant, OHCWA; Mandy Merlin, administrative assistant, Finance and Resources Office; Karen Moffett, Dental Hygienist (therapist), OHCWA; Andrew Moore, casual appointment, Graduate School of Management; Andre Morkel, casual appointment, Graduate School of Education; Heidi Mostert, PIAR appointment, PIAR; Thomas Polich, human resources adviser, Human Resources; Kristy Prince, administrative assistant, Vice-Chancellor; Karen Pushpalingam, accountant, Finance and Resources Office; Andrea Quagliola, associate lecturer, Architecture, Landscape and Visual Arts; Raylene Reeve, research officer, Primary, Aboriginal and Rural Health Care; Brendan Scott, records assistant, Facilities Management; Zarrin Siddiqui, lecturer, Medicine and Dentistry; Pei Li Siow, accountant, Finance and Resources Office; Sankari Sivaramalingam, network system officer, Admin Computing Services; Russell Teede, administrative assistant, Research Services; Anusha Vasudevan, research associate, Electrical, Electronic, Computer Engineering; Lara Wenlock, office coordinator, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; Alice White, administrative assistant, International Centre; Jonathan Wilson, business manager, Electrical, Electronic, Computer Engineering; Dr Michael Wise, associate professor, Faculty of Life and Physical Sciences; Claire Woolfitt, project officer, Primary, Aboriginal and Rural Health Care
Monday 18 October
SCHOOL OF PLANT BIOLOGY SEMINAR SERIES
‘Plant breeding—accelerated evolution’, Associate Professor Duane Falk, Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences Distinguished Visitor, cereal breeder/geneticist in the Department of Plant Agriculture at the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada. Contact Louise Cullen, School of Plant Biology, 6488 3445, lccullen@cyllene.uwa.edu.au. 4pm, Agriculture Lecture Theatre.

Tuesday 19 October
SCHOOL OF ANATOMY AND HUMAN BIOLOGY SEMINAR SERIES
‘System failure during sleep—snoring and sleep apnoea’, Dr Peter Eastwood, NHMRC R. Douglas Wright Fellow, West Australian Sleep Disorders Research Institute, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and Senior Research Fellow, School of Anatomy and Human Biology, UWA. Contact Debbie Hull, 6488 3290, dhull@anh.uwa.edu.au. 1pm, School of Anatomy and Human Biology.

MARINE SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING SEMINAR
‘Drift seaweed as a food subsidy for seagrass and reef fauna’, Mathew Vanderklift, CSIRO Marine Research. Contact Ruth Gongora-Meas, 6488 3525, gongora@cwru.edu.au. 4pm, Room 119, School of Water Research.

Thursday 21 October
THE ANTI-POVERTY WEEK FORUM
Poverty and severe hardship affect more than a million Australians. Around the world, more than a billion people are desperately poor. This event aims to establish community priorities for addressing poverty at the State level. Speakers include Mark Peel, historian and author of the highly acclaimed book The Lowest Rung: Voices of Australian Poverty; and John Wicks, Vice-President of the National Social Justice Committee, St Vincent de Paul Society. Come and have your say. To register, call 6488 1340, email ias@admin.uwa.edu.au. Required. For more information phone 6488 1340, email ias@admin.uwa.edu.au. 7pm, Social Sciences Lecture Theatre.

Friday 22 October
SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL AND CHEMICAL SCIENCES—MICROBIOLOGY SEMINAR
‘Stenotrophomonas maltophilia infection in Western Australia: Cloning, Characterisation and Sequencing of Helicobacter pylori Promoters—Regulation Under Low pH Conditions’ Niki Foster and Amanda Lloyd, Microbiology, 9am, Seminar Room 1.1, First Floor, L Block, QEII Medical Centre.

Monday 22 October
9.30am–12.30pm, Friday 29 October
ASIAN STUDIES SEMINAR SERIES
‘US Hegemony and Indonesia: The Bush Era’, David Bourchier. 1pm, Seminar Room G.25, Ground Floor, Social Sciences Building.

Tuesday 26 October
UWA CATHOLIC SOCIETY

Wednesday 27 October
BIOCHEMISTRY SEMINAR
‘From Genome to ‘Venome’: the Molecular Evolution of Snake Venom’, Dr Bryan Greg Fry, Deputy Director of the Australian Venom Research Unit at the Department of Pharmacology, School of Medicine, University of Melbourne. Contact Jennifer Gillett, jgillett@cyllene.uwa.edu.au. 12pm, White Lecture Theatre.

INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION
‘Who you are or where you are? Social and spatial patterning of health’, Professor Sally Macintyre, Director, MRC Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, University of Glasgow. All welcome. No reservation required. For more information phone 6488 1340, email ias@admin.uwa.edu.au. 7pm, Social Sciences Lecture Theatre.

Friday 29 October
SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL AND CHEMICAL SCIENCES—MICROBIOLOGY SEMINAR
‘Allergy: Have you had a gut full? Probiotics and allergy prevention’, Associate Professor Susan Prescott, School of Paediatrics and Child Health. 9am, Seminar Room 1.1, First Floor, L Block, QEII Medical Centre.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY SEMINAR
A cultural genealogy of Italian folk revivalism’, Stephen Bennetts. 11am, Anthropology Conference Room 1.30.

LAWRENCE WILSON ART GALLERY PUBLIC TALKS
‘Cloud Stories’, Brian Kowald, Bureau of Meteorology. 1pm, Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery.

BIOCHEMISTRY SEMINAR
‘Generating liver progenitor cell lines at the Pasteur Institute’, Associate Professor George C Yeh, Biochemistry. Contact Jennifer Gillett, jgillett@cyllene.uwa.edu.au. 1pm, White Lecture Theatre.

CLIMA SEMINAR
‘Response to water deficit and high temperature of transgenic field peas containing a seed-specific a-amylase inhibitor and the subsequent effects on pea weevil’, Dr Mazr Majer, Curtin University; ‘Exploiting wild relatives of chickpea for resistance to Helicoverpa’, Dr James Ridsdill-Smith, CSIRO. 4pm, CLIMA Seminar Room.

Contact Ray Horn on 6488 8790 to discuss all your printing needs.
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CORPORATE MEMBER OF RCSA

The Allergy Prevention Program

The research group headed by A/Professor Susan Prescott (UWA School of Paediatrics and Child Health) is looking for allergic and non-allergic pregnant women (especially first-time mums) to participate in studies investigating the development of allergic disease and potential allergy prevention strategies.

If you are interested or would like more information please email Angie Taylor (angiet@ichr.uwa.edu.au) or phone 9340 8834.

Study: The effects of antioxidant vitamins on immune function

The research group headed by A/Professor Susan Prescott (UWA School of Paediatrics and Child Health) is looking for adults with a history of asthma or hay fever between the age of 18–44 years to participate in a vitamin supplement trial for one month to evaluate the effects of antioxidants on immune response.

If you are interested or would like more information please email Dr Jan Dunstan (jand@ichr.uwa.edu.au) or phone 9340 8834 and leave your phone number.

ARE YOU OVERWEIGHT?

THE KEOGH INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH needs VOLUNTEERS for a long-term weight management study.

You may be suitable for the study if:
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**Redundant Equipment for Sale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>PRICE</th>
<th>AGE (YRS)</th>
<th>COND.</th>
<th>SECTION</th>
<th>CONTACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toshiba Tera 8000 128MB RAM, 10GB hard drive, 14.1in screen, DVD, modem/network combo card, Windows 98</td>
<td>$350</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Business School</td>
<td>Mark Croonen, 6488 1405</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toshiba Satellite 2540XCDT 64MB RAM, 4.3GB hard drive, 14.1in screen, CD, modem and network card, Windows 98</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Business School</td>
<td>Mark Croonen, 6488 1405</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 x Macintosh PB G3 OS v.6, 64MB hard disk, 4.5GB</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>Muriel Mahoney, 6488 2128</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Bids should be accepted by Monday 1 November with schools to have first option

Schools are reminded that all University equipment available for sale must be advertised in the **UWAnews**. 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.