

campus news

University of Wollongong



UOW hosts historic Universities workshop



Changing of the guard – University of Wollongong Vice-Chancellor and Universities Australia Chair Professor Gerard Sutton (right), with Professor Richard Larkins from Monash University (second from left) who will take over the role in January. They are pictured in Wollongong during the Universities Australia workshop in August with UA's incoming Chief Executive Officer Dr Glenn Withers (left), and former UOW Vice-Principal (Administration) David Rome who has been the organisation's interim CEO.

The University of Wollongong in August hosted the historic inaugural annual workshop of Universities Australia, the new peak body of the Australian higher education sector.

The three-day workshop held from August 25-27 heralded a new era, as Universities Australia has replaced the former Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) as the chief advocacy group for Australia's universities.

UOW Vice-Chancellor and Universities Australia Chair Professor Gerard Sutton, who as AVCC President since January 2006 presided over the transition to the new body, said the workshop had been a major success.

"We received a lot of feedback suggesting that many delegates thought it was the most successful universities workshop they'd attended," Professor Sutton said. "It certainly got the Universities Australia era off to a very constructive start."

Professor Sutton said the transition from the AVCC to Universities Australia model had resulted from a review that suggested ways in which the sector's peak body could play a more effective advocacy role. That included creating a body that had universities, rather than individual Vice-Chancellors, as its members. Universities Australia's first workshop, therefore, was designed to establish priorities and develop strategies.

Key areas for discussion included the operation of the Higher Education Endowment Fund and the Research Quality Framework. The workshop also developed priorities and strategies for this year's Federal election.

Professor Sutton said eminent speakers from outside the sector had given the Vice-Chancellors valuable external perspectives on major issues facing universities.

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Campus News is produced for community, industry, government and other educational institutions as well as staff, students and graduates of the University of Wollongong. It provides an overview of University news and achievements on a quarterly basis.

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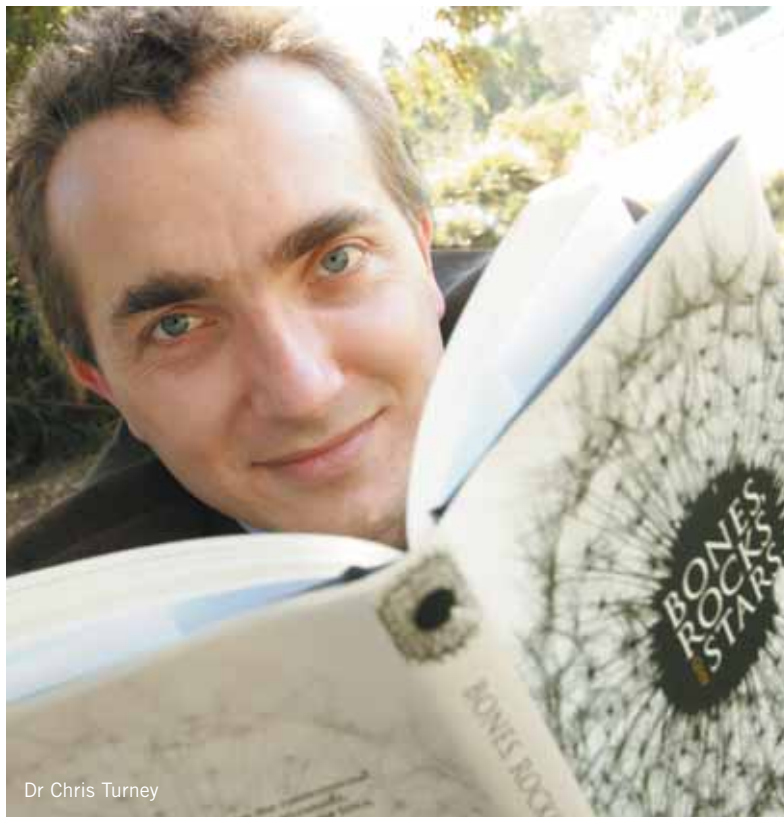
Looking back to the future

Dr Chris Turney is a Research Fellow at UOW's GeoQuest Research Centre at the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, and an international authority on the study and carbon dating of ancient plants and fossils. He is the author of *Bones, Rocks and Stars – the Science of When Things Happened* (MacMillan). In this Opinion article, he reflects on climate change - past, present and future.

Imagine a world of wildly escalating temperatures, apocalyptic flooding, devastating storms and catastrophic sea level rise.

This might sound like a prediction for the future or the storyline of a new Hollywood blockbuster but it's something quite different: it's our past. In a day and age when we're bombarded with worrying forecasts for future climate, it seems hard to believe that such things could come to pass. Yet almost everywhere we turn, the landscape is screaming out that the world is a capricious place. The problem is if we don't tune in, the message is lost. We need to decipher the past and learn from it.

In some parts of the world, a few early snapshots of the weather, recorded by enthusiasts, help us. In the 18th century, an interest in meteorology was highly applauded. You didn't have to be hairy and middle-aged. A clean-shaven and young Thomas Jefferson kept a weather journal; from this we know it was pretty mild in Philadelphia during the Declaration of Independence on 4 July in 1776. We can also look back at pictures where the weather forms part of the scene. There's a beautiful painting by Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze showing George Washington crossing the Delaware River in 1776. The river is clogged with enormous berg-like blocks of ice. It's a romantic piece of work that was painted some 75 years after the



Dr Chris Turney

event but suggests a winter that would be unimaginable today. However, though, paintings can only take you back so far.

Happily, when our ancestors were fighting one another, nature was recording the conditions at the time; depending on the season, trees, peat bogs, ice and mud all preserve an archive of what the conditions were like when they were formed. The trick is how to read what nature has left behind. When we do, a worrying conclusion hits us between the eyes. The average global warming of 0.8°C over the past century is beyond what is natural.

In 2002, a chunk of Antarctic Peninsula ice known as the Larsen B shelf collapsed into the Weddell Sea, never to be seen again. It might not sound that exciting but this wasn't just any old piece of ice. This was 3,200 square kilometres, equivalent to the size of Rhode Island. And it wasn't something that happens

every Tuesday week. The researchers who went into the area afterwards were able to show this was a one in 12,000-year event. And it all happened in 31 days. Once the shelf started to disintegrate, there was no stopping it. After all the to-ing and fro-ing of temperature during recent millennia it was only in the 21st century that the conditions were exceptional enough for Larsen B to collapse into the sea.

The Antarctic Peninsula is a fabulous place to observe changing climate. A 1300 km-long finger of land that juts far beyond any other part of Antarctica, it's suffering from a severe case of over-heating. The region has warmed 2.5°C since the 1950s, four times the global average. It was all too much for Larsen B. Melt water built up on the surface and squeezed down the crevasses, weakening the ice. The shelf managed to deal with earlier warmings but this was the final straw. After 12,000 years it was time to say goodbye. It was an extraordinary event in our planet's history.

Larsen B is strong evidence that today's warming is exceptional. But this is just an opening shot. Glaciers in the Andes and Europe are shrinking back to a size not seen for 5000 years. Meanwhile, temperatures across the northern hemisphere are the highest they've been for at least 1000 years. These aren't natural changes that can be explained by natural processes. We can only explain today's warming by taking into account the billions of tonnes of greenhouse gases we're pumping into the atmosphere each year. Our seemingly insatiable demand for fossil fuels is killing us. As other parts of the world get warmer, we'll start to see more of these one in 12,000-year events.

We've been living on borrowed time but we still have a choice. We can do something about the mess we're creating. We can listen to the warnings from the past and change our ways. **CT**

UOW hosts historic Universities workshop

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Speakers included Arthur Sinodinos, the former Chief of Staff to Prime Minister John Howard, and News Limited's National Political Correspondent Steve Lewis.

Professor Sutton, who will end his two-year term as AVCC President/Universities Australia Chair at

the end of the year, said he had been privileged to lead the organisations that represent Australia's 38 publically funded and one private university (Bond) during the transition period.

"It has been challenging, but very rewarding," he said. "Any change is difficult, but it has been very satisfying that all the universities whose Vice-Chancellors were members of the AVCC have come across as members of Universities Australia.

"I think industry bodies need to reinvent themselves over time, and it was certainly time for

the university sector to reorganise its peak body. The changes have made Universities Australia more representative of the sector and therefore a much more effective advocacy group to both government and the community.

"We have already seen how much more effective we are as a lobby group, in terms of the attention we are receiving from Ministers and Shadow Ministers."

Monash University Vice-Chancellor Professor Richard Larkins will take over from Professor Sutton as Universities Australia Chair in January. **NH**

Deputy V-C makes history with the ARC

Professor Margaret Sheil made University of Wollongong history when she took over as Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Research Council (ARC) in August.

UOW's former Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) is now charged with the responsibility of running the Canberra-based ARC, the federally-funded body that allocates around \$550 million annually to fund research projects at universities and research centres around Australia.

The highly-respected academic's appointment received widespread acclaim in government, education and national media circles when it was announced. *The Australian Financial Review* commented that "Science is expecting great things from the Australian Research Council's new chief executive," and "if anyone can bring a touch of magic to the research and innovation sector, Sheil can".

UOW Vice-Chancellor Professor Gerard Sutton said the University could take great pride in Professor Sheil's achievements, and in her ARC role - the first time a UOW academic has been appointed to the top job at the ARC.

More than 200 people attended a farewell dinner for Professor Sheil in August.

Welcoming guests to the dinner, Chancellor Michael Codd AC praised Professor Sheil for her outstanding leadership of the University's research program over the past five years and congratulated her on her appointment to one of the nation's key research posts.



New Australian Research Council Chief Executive Officer Professor Margaret Sheil pictured at her farewell from UOW with Chancellor Michael Codd AC (left) and Vice-Chancellor Professor Gerard Sutton.

"Since you took a leadership role in research we have made enormous progress in that area," Mr Codd said. The Chancellor said Professor Sheil's approach to commercialisation, seed funding and intellectual property rights had paid enormous dividends for the University.

Professor Sutton acknowledged Professor Sheil's many achievements over a 17-year career at UOW, including being appointed Australia's first female Chemistry Professor in 2000, followed closely by becoming Dean of the Faculty of Science then Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) in 2002 and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) in 2005.

"That (Pro Vice-Chancellor's appointment) was one of the wisest decisions we ever made," Professor Sutton said. "In the five years since that appointment we have seen an enormous escalation of our research reputation on a national and international basis. The framework, support and leadership to make that happen has come from Margaret."

Other speakers included Pro Vice-Chancellor

(Research) Professor Lee Astheimer, who acknowledged Professor Sheil's powerful support for the University's female academics; Dean of Arts Professor Andrew Wells, who spoke of Professor Sheil's "energy, quickness of mind, passion and humour"; and Dean of Engineering Professor Chris Cook, who presented an amusing "sonnet" of "survival hints for Margaret's new staff in Canberra".

Professor Sheil described her 17 years at UOW as "an incredible learning experience".

She acknowledged her first department head, Professor Leon Kane-Maguire, who had taught her many things including the importance of good recruitment and Professor John Bremner who taught her the value of taking good ideas, and sticking with them.

She praised the success of women in UOW's professional ranks and thanked them and all the Faculty Deans for their support.

But she reserved special praise for Professor Sutton, who she described as "an incredible leader and an outstanding boss". **NH**

Wollongong continues its 5-star success

The 2008 *Good Universities Guide* has reaffirmed the University of Wollongong's standing as one of the country's leading research institutions and a place where students experience a five-star educational experience and a five-star chance of gaining a job with a top salary at the end of their degree.

Under the Guide's ranking system, only the top 20 per cent of universities can be awarded a five-star rating in any one category.

The guide's authors highlighted the fact that UOW was in the top seven nationally for graduate employment.

They described UOW overall as a "strong performer" and pointed out that Wollongong scored consistently across many major indicators.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Gerard Sutton said the categories in which UOW consistently excelled were

Wollongong recorded the maximum five stars for:

- > research intensity
- > generic skills
- > graduate satisfaction
- > getting a job
- > positive graduate outcomes
- > graduate starting salaries

key indicators of a university performing at a very high level.

He said the guide's findings clearly showed that UOW was among the elite research and teaching universities in this country.

"Australian and overseas students will scrutinise this

guide very carefully and when they do they will see just how well the University of Wollongong stands out in comparison to other universities," he said.

The *Good Universities Guide* draws its information from the Federal Government's Department of Education, Science and Training as well as the results of the national Graduate Destination Surveys.

Meanwhile, UOW has been included in the Top 500 academic rankings of world universities by the respected Institute of Higher Education at Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

The rankings are strongly weighted in favour of research.

The Institute scans universities that have Nobel Laureates, field medals, highly cited researchers, or papers published in the prestigious *Nature* or *Science* magazines. **BG**

Accenture partnership praised

Federal Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer Peter Dutton praised the partnership between the University of Wollongong and global technology services company Accenture as an answer to the global IT skills shortage.

Accenture has established an IT development centre at the University of Wollongong to service a major contract with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

The centre already employs 80 people, mainly IT professionals, and there are plans to expand the workforce to 150. UOW's Faculty of Informatics is one of Australia's largest IT training centres, and access to its graduates was a key factor in Accenture's decision to locate in Wollongong.

Speaking at the official opening of the facility in July, Mr Dutton said Accenture's decision to come to the University meant "local students can come here to learn, and there is a great opportunity for them to earn as well."

Mr Dutton said with the strength of the Australian economy and acknowledged skills shortages, companies were finding it difficult to fill certain skilled positions.

"With the economy at an all-time high and unemployment at a 33-year low, it is incredibly difficult for companies to find highly skilled staff," Mr Dutton said. "The way that this project has been brought together highlights the best qualities of both institutions (to overcome this problem)," he said.

Accenture Australian Managing Director Doug Snedden said Accenture had experienced a lot of



(From left): UOW Vice-Chancellor Professor Gerard Sutton, Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Minister for Revenue Peter Dutton, Australian Taxation Office Second Commissioner Greg Farr and Accenture Australia Managing Director Doug Snedden after the Minister had officially opened the Accenture service centre at the University.

growth in Australia in recent years, particularly in working with companies implementing new technology. However, it had experienced shortages in IT skills in its major metropolitan markets.

"So we were looking for somewhere where we could increase our capacity to undertake work by tapping into a pool of skilled people," he said. "We were also looking for a location in a conducive environment, because we recognise that people are increasingly looking for a work environment where they can balance their life and their career.

"We've been absolutely delighted with the quality of

the people we've been able to recruit, the response to recruiting and the support that we have received from the University and the NSW Department of State and Regional Development."

Mr Snedden said the centre would be "absolutely world-class" and an integral part of Accenture's business in Australia.

University of Wollongong Vice-Chancellor Professor Gerard Sutton said the partnership between UOW and Accenture was a model for companies faced with the temptation to move IT jobs off-shore to reduce costs. **NH**

NSW backs nano-research



The NSW Government has provided a \$1 million grant to the University of Wollongong to support research and development in the field of nanotechnology.

Minister for the Illawarra David Campbell, who is also Police Minister, said the funding was provided through the lemma Government's Science Leveraging Fund, which was established last year to support NSW researchers.

"Over the past year the NSW

Government has worked with the University of Wollongong, University of Newcastle and the Federal Government to develop a base for electromaterials research in Wollongong," Mr Campbell said.

"This research node will have its headquarters in the \$25 million Advanced Materials Centre at the University of Wollongong's new Innovation Campus (iC).

"The lemma Government's investment is another example of the ongoing

financial support for the University and the outstanding leadership they are showing in research and development," the Minister said.

Mr Campbell said the project would bring together expertise from UOW's Intelligent Polymer Research Institute and Institute for Superconducting Electronic Materials, as well as expertise from the University of Newcastle's Centre for Organic Electronics.

"The Wollongong node will provide both researchers and industry with access to key research infrastructure, equipment and expertise," Mr Campbell said.

Mr Campbell said the NSW Government's \$1 million grant helped attract a further \$1 million from the Federal Government, with about half of the federal money to be spent in Wollongong. **BG**

Minister for the Illawarra David Campbell (centre) makes the announcement of the \$1 million nanotechnology grant at UOW's Innovation Campus where researchers in this field will move in 2008. Pictured with the Minister are iC Director David Fuller (left) and Intelligent Polymer Research Institute Director Professor Gordon Wallace.

New IT School

Minister for the Illawarra David Campbell launched the new School of Information Systems and Technology (SISAT) at UOW in August.

Speakers at the launch referred to the offering of new degrees, exciting new research directions and the fusion of technology and business.

SISAT head Associate Professor Peter Hyland said the new school highlighted the importance of high-quality graduates who are so much in demand by major IT consulting companies, worldwide.

"The IT industry, both locally and internationally, needs far more graduates than our present programs can supply. Our new school will produce exactly the type of graduates that the industry needs and will appeal to national and international students," Professor Hyland said. **BG**

GSM welcomes its new Dean

The University of Wollongong has appointed Professor Liz Farmer as Dean of the Graduate School of Medicine (GSM).

Professor Farmer, from Flinders University Medical School in South Australia, will take on the new role in January. For the past year she has had a consulting role with the GSM, as Director of Educational Development.

Professor Farmer is the first female general practitioner to be appointed Dean of a medical school in Australia.

The GSM's Foundation Dean Professor John Hogg welcomed Professor Farmer's appointment.

"It is a great pleasure seeing Liz's appointment as Dean," said Professor

Hogg. "Having worked with her over the past year or so, I have great confidence that everything we have worked for will be maintained and built on by a person who totally supports the school's vision and mission."

Professor Hogg, a leading Illawarra surgeon, joined UOW in August 2004 to take on the role of Foundation Dean. He worked closely with Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences Executive Dean Professor Don Iverson on the establishment of the GSM, which opened this year with a focus of preparing doctors to work in regional and rural areas.

Professor Farmer says she is excited by the appointment. "It is certainly a great honour, and a rare opportunity to be



Graduate School of Medicine Foundation Dean Professor John Hogg with new Dean Professor Liz Farmer, after her appointment was announced in July.

involved in helping to build a medical school from the ground up," she said. "The school is setting its own direction, while taking the best of what is known about medical education around the world.

"It is also a fantastic opportunity to be involved in a school with such an important vision – to produce excellent medical graduates with a vocation to

work in regional and rural areas."

Professor Hogg will continue to work with the GSM, focusing particularly on strengthening relationships with the health communities of the Illawarra and other parts of NSW, delivering both clinical placement opportunities for GSM students and opportunities for medical practitioners to be involved in research programs. **NH**

Scholarship to honour Howard Worner

The late Professor Howard Worner influenced many thousands of students during his long and stellar career as one of Australia's most renowned scientists and metallurgists.

Now one of those students, whose life changed dramatically after a chance meeting with Professor Worner more than half a century ago, is determined to make sure his legacy is preserved through the establishment of a memorial scholarship.

ITC Group of Companies Chairman and University of Wollongong Councillor Dr Brian Hickman is leading an appeal to establish the Howard Worner Memorial Scholarship at the University.

The pair met by chance in the early 1950s, when Dr Hickman was a Chemistry student at the University of Melbourne and Professor Worner the Professor of Metallurgy.

"There was a transport strike and I was hitch-hiking to University," Dr Hickman said. "Professor Worner stopped and offered me a lift. When

he learned I was a student he offered to pick me up every day while the strike continued.

"The strike lasted four or five weeks, and by the end he'd convinced me to change courses from Chemistry to Metallurgy."

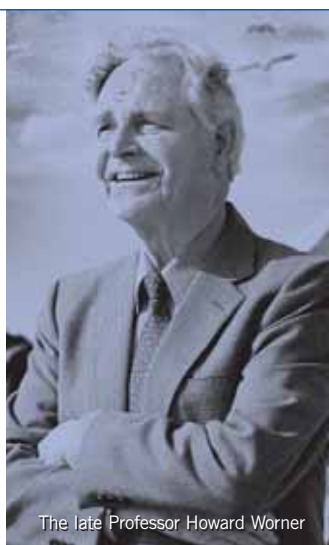
It was a pivotal decision in Dr Hickman's life. He went on to complete his Bachelor of Science (Metallurgy) degree and a Masters degree (with the assistance of a post-graduate scholarship organised by Professor Worner), before embarking on a highly successful international research and business career in metallurgy, aerospace materials and mining.

Professor Worner, meanwhile, moved into private industry as a research scientist where he led revolutionary work in continuous smelting techniques for copper and steel making at CRA and BHP.

By chance they both became involved at UOW. After retiring to Wollongong to live near his daughter, Professor



Dr Brian Hickman



The late Professor Howard Worner

Worner became involved with UOW where he continued his interest in continuous smelting techniques and led a committed research group investigating applications of microwave heating to industrial processing.

In 2000 he donated his impressive collection of more than 1000 rare mineral and rock samples to UOW. The Howard Worner Collection is now on permanent display in the Faculty of Science building.

Dr Hickman, meanwhile, became involved with the University's corporate arm, ITC Group, as a consultant in 1991 and later joined the ITC board of which he is now chairman. He was also appointed to the University Council in 1995.

Dr Hickman says Professor Worner, who died last year aged 93, was "an inspiration to anyone who had anything to do with him."

"Howard Worner was a wonderful mentor through my university years and for much of my working life," Dr Hickman said. "The scholarship is a way that we can remember him and recognise his enormous contribution both as an educator and a researcher."

Dr Hickman said the Howard Worner Scholarship will recognise Professor Worner's rural origins by providing scholarships for students from rural backgrounds to study engineering or science at UOW. It will encourage recipients to draw upon Professor Worner's ideals and achievements as guidance for their own development.

The appeal has already raised \$15,000 and Dr Hickman said he was hoping to raise \$200,000 to establish a fund that would allow the scholarship to be provided in perpetuity. He is hopeful major mining and metals companies and industry organisations will support the fund, but would also welcome private contributions.

All gifts to the Howard Worner Memorial Scholarship Fund are tax deductible. For more information, go to www.uow.edu.au/donations or contact UOW's Manager, Community and Partnerships Monique Harper-Richardson on (02) 4221 5759. **NH**

Thumbs up for couch potatoes

In a victory for “couch potatoes”, the days of scrounging around sofas searching for the television remote control will soon be over, thanks to ‘wave of the hand’ technology developed at the University of Wollongong.

The all-seeing wave controller is the brainchild of Dr Prashan Premaratne of UOW’s School of Electrical, Computer and Telecommunications Engineering and Australian National University PhD student Quang Nguyen, who had been an undergraduate student working with Dr Premaratne at UOW.

Dr Premaratne’s test results were published in July in the *Institution of*

Engineering and Technology’s *Computer Vision Research Journal* in Britain. The story was also published in the mass-circulation *Daily Mail* newspaper, the catalyst for widespread coverage from news organisations around the world.

Dr Premaratne and Mr Nguyen developed a box that lets television viewers change channels, switch on the DVD player or simply switch off an irritating presenter or program with the wave of a hand.

The controller’s built-in camera contains software that recognises simple, deliberate hand gestures and then sends the appropriate signal to a universal remote control, designed to



Dr Prashan Premaratne with a computer image of the *Daily Mail*’s graphic showing how the hand wave technology will work.

work with most makes of television, video recorder, DVD player, hi-fi and digital set-top box.

The device can switch equipment on and off, alter the volume, change channels, play and stop, and Dr

Premaratne believes it could be on sale within three years.

Dr Premaratne said people have tried to replace remote controls with voice recognition or glove-based devices with mixed results. **BG**

Unravelling the secrets of flesh-eating bacteria

Researchers at the University of Wollongong, University of California San Diego, University of Tennessee and the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research in Germany have discovered an explanation for how a deadly strain of “flesh-eating” bacteria has evolved to produce serious human infections worldwide.

The research, reported by the prestigious *Nature Medicine*, focuses on the major human pathogen group *A Streptococcus* (“strep”). Professor Mark Walker from UOW’s School of Biological Sciences was lead author.

Among the most important of all human infectious disease agents, strep is responsible for a wide range of diseases, from simple throat and skin infections to life-threatening invasive conditions such as necrotizing fasciitis (“flesh-eating disease”) and toxic shock syndrome.

The incidence of serious strep infections has risen dramatically in the last three decades, largely attributed to the spread of a single strain of strep known as the invasive MIT1 clone.

The research group has sought to identify what makes MIT1 so virulent for humans.

They observed that during the early



Professor Mark Walker

stages of a simple skin infection, a small subpopulation of the strep bacteria hijack a protein from the human bloodstream called plasminogen, attach it to their own surfaces, then activate it into the enzyme, protease, which is capable of destroying cells and tissues, thus allowing the bacteria to break out and spread through the body.

The researchers have discovered that a specific genetic mutation in the MIT1 strep clone controls the shift to this invasive form.

The researchers identified how the human immune system applies the pressure of natural selection that normally would clear a localised infection, but in the case of the MIT1 strep clone, favours the emergence of the invasive mutants.

This property of the MIT1 strep clone can be traced to an event that occurred about 30 years ago, when a virus known as a bacteriophage infected the strep bacteria and introduced a new gene that allowed the bacteria to resist clearance by the human immune system.

“Just like a computer virus might come in and reprogram your hard drive, this bacteriophage reprogrammed the genetic machinery of the MIT1 strep into a more virulent form,” according to Professor Walker. “The consequences of this event on human health are still being felt three decades later,” he said. **BG**

Bird study hatches cover story

Research involving the University of Wollongong’s Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Lee Astheimer featured as the cover story in a recent edition of the prestigious journal, *Science*, published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

Professor Astheimer, who conducts research in the broad area of comparative physiology and endocrinology, has co-authored a paper entitled *Reduced Egg Investment Can Conceal Helper Effects in Cooperatively Breeding Birds*.



In humans the concept of helpful offspring reducing parents’ work-load is well-known.

Professor Astheimer and her co-researchers from the Universities of Sheffield and Cambridge in Britain and the Australian National University and Macquarie University studied the cooperative breeding system of superb fairy-wrens.

Their study showed mothers nesting in the presence of helpers laid smaller eggs of lower nutritional content that gave rise to lighter chicks at hatching than mothers breeding without helpers. However, these smaller chicks did not suffer because

the helpers compensated for maternal reductions in investment by increasing the amount of food that the chicks received during development. **BG**

Support Integral to centre's success

Integral Energy has invested a further \$1 million to improve power quality and reliability to customers by funding power engineering activities at the University of Wollongong.

Integral Energy, which provided the initial funding for establishing Australia's first power quality centre in 1996, has now invested more than \$3 million in UOW's Power Quality and Reliability Centre.

At a special ceremony in August, Integral Energy Chief Executive Officer Richard Powis signed a three-year agreement with UOW Vice-Chancellor Professor Gerard Sutton.

Over the past 12 years, the Integral Energy Power Quality and Reliability Centre has saved major companies hundreds of thousands of dollars by helping them understand how to operate their businesses within the capabilities of the electricity network.

"Through our support we're able to partner with a leading university in new ways to supply better services for our customers and improve the quality of supply they receive in their homes and businesses," Mr Powis said.

Associate Professor Sarath Perera of the Faculty of Informatics said the funding came at a critical period when there was a great deal of discussion regarding sustainable power generation, greenhouse gases and global warming.

Professor Perera said this major investment by Integral would make a significant contribution to allow the centre to take positive action to train

engineers for the future following a recent study by the centre identifying a looming national shortage of power engineers.

Mr Powis said the study had been taken very seriously by the electricity industry and had resulted in several initiatives such as Integral Energy continuing its support of the centre.

"The study not only identified the looming skills' shortage of power engineers, but also a severe shortage of academics with specialist knowledge of power systems," he said.

In addition to training of undergraduates and postgraduates and provision of continuing education courses to practising engineers, a major objective of the Power Quality and Reliability Centre is to work with industry to improve the quality and reliability of the electricity supply to industrial, commercial and domestic users.

Professor Sutton praised Integral for its ongoing commitment by making such a significant investment.

"This partnership is critical to the future needs of the electricity industry in Australia," Professor Sutton said, adding that it was also important to attract engineering students to the industry. **BG**

Participating in the signing ceremony are (from left): Integral Energy CEO Richard Powis, UOW Vice-Chancellor Professor Gerard Sutton, Integral's Network Development and Control General Manager Rod Howard, Associate Professor Sarath Perera and Dean of Informatics Professor Joe Chicharo.



Obituary

PHIL D'ALTON

1945 - 2007



Dr Phil D'Alton, a long-term staff member at UOW's Faculty of Arts, died recently after battling cancer. He is remembered here by his colleague, Dr Mike Donaldson:

Phil D'Alton started working in the Faculty of Arts in 1975, the year the University of Wollongong's Sociology Department came into existence.

Phil was a man with great prescience, and only now have we caught up with him. Decades before concern about them became commonsense, he taught and wrote novels about global warming and planetary eco-catastrophe.

He co-wrote a famous first-year Sociology textbook which sold thousands, and unusually for that genre, had more than one edition. In it, and uniquely for that time, he placed nature at the centre of social analysis.

Phil had studied and written about women in the military almost before there were any, and his thinking on masculinity, drugs and sport was succinct and pungent.

He and I chuckled about our Faculty's recent "turn to China". Nearly two decades ago, Phil had spent a study leave at the Shaolin Temple in that country, much to the tut-tutting of almost everyone, even though he was the first westerner to be invited to study there.

"De Chau" he is called in the Da Xiang Guo tradition in which he is a senior patron. It means "passer on of knowledge".

At Phil's funeral after the intense struggle with cancer, his colleagues and students, and Buddhist monks from the Sunnataram Forest Monastery, spoke of his rare ability to move from east to west, from one world to another, with grace and modesty while always remaining who and what he was.

Phil had a singular nature, no post-modern multiple identities for him, and at its centre was generosity, genuine and self-disregarding.

For almost every session for more than 30 years, Phil taught 60 per cent of Sociology's student load - two (sometimes three) very large first year subjects as well as his own specialities.

Students loved his teaching because he stimulated them, cared about them, was there for them and was passionate about what he taught them. He had time for us, too, encouraging our endeavours, open to and sharing new ideas. He was always willing to do more than his portion of the graft without whingeing, working amicably and companionably for the common good.

Phil was a great colleague and a lovely friend. We will miss him very much. **MD**

Colourful celebration of diversity

The University of Wollongong's annual International Week in August featured a range of colourful and entertaining celebrations of the University's cultural diversity.

Staff, students and the community participated in the festival. Activities included a blend of free performances, displays, guest speakers, games, activities, movies and international food.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International) Professor Rob Castle said UOW's fifth "I Week" once again provided the University community with an opportunity to celebrate and experience the diverse cultures and countries represented on campus, as well as acknowledging and celebrating achievements of students and staff.

Highlights included a bush dance, a global workplace information session, study abroad and exchange sessions, a Chinese Cultural Festival, a



Japanese Matsuri festival, an international health symposium and a picnic day on the Duck Pond Lawn featuring international food and games.

Another highlight was the Global Highway, which involved a 'highway' of stalls set up across the campus. At each stall, participants could take part in an activity or watch a performance that represented a particular country. Global Highway was organised by students in the UOW residences and the nations represented included Australia, China, France, India, Japan, Kenya, Iran, Singapore, Thailand, the United Kingdom, the United States and Saudi Arabia.

This page features a selection of "I Week" photographs from Media Unit photographers Sean Maguire and Mark Newsham. [RC](#)



Postcard from Dubai



The University of Wollongong in Dubai (UOWD) has been operating since 1993 and is now one of the most prestigious educational institutions in the United Arab Emirates. UOWD currently has an enrolment of approximately 2,200 students undertaking Bachelors and Masters degrees in Business and Computer Science at its location in Dubai's Knowledge Village.

Book examines e-commerce concerns

University of Wollongong in Dubai Associate Professor Lejla Vrazalic has collaborated with Wollongong colleague Associate Professor Robert MacGregor on a book that examines the reasons why many small businesses do not participate in e-commerce.



Associate Professor
Lejla Vrazalic

Their findings have important implications for the implementation of e-commerce in the Gulf states.

The two academics state that security concerns are the primary reason for low adoption rates of e-commerce amongst small businesses, in their book titled *E-Commerce in Regional Small to Medium Enterprises*.

The book is the outcome of studies spanning two years that show regional SMEs in developed countries of Australia, Sweden and the United States have low e-commerce adoption rates. But Professor Vrazalic says the findings have important lessons for the Gulf countries.

The book endorses the widely held view that security concerns prevent small businesses from adopting e-commerce. It is also consistent with the view that small businesses generally do not have the same access to technical resources and expertise that larger organisations do. As a result, the security concerns become a major barrier.

"Governments that wish to promote e-commerce practices in small businesses need to understand the mindset of the group when devising policies", Professor Vrazalic said. "Small businesses cannot be treated as a homogenous group of organisations. They require tailored programs to assist with e-commerce implementation. These programs should provide expertise to initiate e-commerce and also draw from the collective experiences of small businesses in implementing e-commerce."

The flourishing economy of the UAE has led to a number of government initiatives promoting a leading innovation-based knowledge economy, the most notable being establishment of "smart cities" such as the Dubai Internet City and its US\$1.3 billion expansion project, expected to be complete by the end of this year.

However, the major IT-using companies are large corporates in the banking, telecommunications, energy, transport sectors and government departments themselves. The small and medium businesses lag behind their larger counterparts.

"It is in governments' interest to promote e-business in small businesses because small businesses are the backbone of the economy. E-business is an enabler that allows small businesses to compete in the international arena and also promotes exports," Professor Vrazalic said. **CN**

UOW art exhibition in Dubai

An art exhibition from Wollongong aiming to bridge cultural differences and explore the 'cultural fault lines' within contemporary society was recently on display in Dubai.

The exhibiton *Transforming Perceptions Via...* featured paintings by UOW postgraduate student, Annette Tzavaras, in the Empty Quarter Gallery in Knowledge Village.

Annette, who is completing a Master of Arts (Research) in Visual Arts at UOW, said it was also motivated by her interest in Islamic culture in Australian contemporary art and society.

"The Dubai environment was ideal to explore shared spaces and places where people, thoughts, cultures and artworks encounter differences – broadening the contextual framework of the exhibition," she said.

"I think the exhibition succeeded in strengthening global unity between different communities and cultures as well as to create associations that facilitated artistic exchanges."

The exhibition was made possible with the support of UOW Vice-Principal (Overseas Operations), Jim Langridge.

UOWD Chief Executive Officer Professor Nick van der Walt said that the exhibition was instrumental in enhancing the relationship between the UOWD campus and the Faculty of Creative Arts in Wollongong.

The majority of the paintings displayed were abstract in style, with elements from Greece and Turkey. **RC**



Annette Tzavaras

Quality training partnership

UOWD and Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance (LRQA) are collaborating to provide training opportunities in quality standards (ISO9001:2000) to postgraduate students studying the Master of Quality Management degree.

The 300 students in UOWD's MQM program now have the opportunity for hands-on training which will allow them to achieve certification as Lead Auditors of the ISO9001:2000 standards, enabling them to drive quality improvements in their organisations.

UOWD College of Graduate Studies Chair Dr Cedwyn Fernandes described the collaboration as a significant milestone for UOWD.

"It will contribute to enhancing our students' practical skills, enabling them to apply the theoretical knowledge in the MQM program," Dr Fernandes said.

Commenting on the importance of Quality Management Systems, LRQA Regional Director Basem Obaid, said government initiatives like the Shaikh Khalifa Awards and the Dubai Quality Awards illustrated the nation's commitment to becoming the centre of business excellence in the region.

"This has made the study of Quality Management principles a rewarding field for professionals in both public and private sectors. We are proud of this cooperation with the University of Wollongong in Dubai which will integrate the strengths of both organisations in order to further develop the ability of the MQM graduates to manage quality initiatives in various industry sectors." **CN**

Awards, achievements and accolades

Writer nominated for rich literary prize

Faculty of Creative Arts lecturer Dr Shady Cosgrove was one of five authors short-listed for *The Australian/Vogel Literary Award* – Australia's richest and most prestigious writing award for an unpublished manuscript.

This coveted annual prize is given to an author under 35 years of age for an original unpublished manuscript of fiction or Australian history or biography. It has launched the careers of some of Australia's most successful writers, including Tim Winton and Kate Grenville, and carries \$20,000 in prizemoney and a publishing deal with Allen and Unwin.

Dr Cosgrove of the School of Journalism and Creative Writing was nominated for her work *She Played Elvis*. This piece of 'creative non-fiction' tracks her journey across the



Dr Shady Cosgrove

United States with her Australian partner to visit Graceland for the 25th anniversary of Elvis Presley's death in 2002. The 75,000 word memoir about pilgrimage, family and nationhood shares her experience of re-acquaintance with America.

The judges' comments about Dr Cosgrove's manuscript included: "It has an eccentric sensibility, sharply observed characters, and an emotional undercurrent suggesting

greater depth. Cosgrove is a classy, intelligent writer with a clear eye for the telling detail."

This year's five shortlisted writers were chosen from nearly 150 applicants, and Dr Cosgrove said she felt hugely honoured to be short-listed for her manuscript.

"It has all been very exciting," she said. "Even though I didn't win, just being nominated was a huge honour. And it means the manuscript is being seriously assessed by publishers." **NH**

Researcher addresses Royal Society conference

UOW solar energy expert Professor David Officer was one of the speakers at the recent 14th International Congress on Photosynthesis conducted by the Royal Society in London.

Professor Officer, from the ARC Centre of Excellence for Electromaterials Science, addressed the conference on *Artificial Photosynthesis: Designing New Materials for Light Harvesting*.

He said the potential for the efficient and sustainable use of solar energy using renewable materials was beautifully illustrated on a daily basis by photosynthesis, the harvesting of light by chlorophyll and the use of the resulting captured energy to split water or convert carbon dioxide into a chemical feedstock.

Professor Officer told the meeting that while the emulation of photosynthesis itself remains one of the great scientific challenges of the

21st century, the light harvesting component is effectively imitated by photo electrochemical solar cells in which solar energy is captured by light harvesting dyes absorbed on nanocrystalline films of a semiconductor such as titanium dioxide.

The conference brought together scientists conducting research into natural photosynthesis and on photochemical, photo electrochemical and photovoltaic systems. **BG**



Professor David Officer

UOW scores 9/10 in Carrick Awards

The University of Wollongong achieved nine of a possible 10 awards in the national Citations for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning, known as the Carrick Awards.

The prestigious citations are awarded annually by the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, which is an initiative of the Federal Government to support and reward excellence in teaching and learning.

Education, Science and Training Minister Julie Bishop announced the 2007 winners in August.

The awards started in 2006, and after a successful round of citations in the first year UOW has again shown its strength in teaching and learning by netting nine of a possible 10 awards.

A UOW delegation, including Vice-Chancellor Professor Gerard Sutton attended a ceremony in Sydney to celebrate the citation winners for this year.

Professor Sutton also gave the keynote

address at the ceremony, emphasising that the contribution of every individual to the quality of learning at their university has far-reaching effects, contributing towards the quality of education in Australia.

The Carrick citations are granted to people who have made a significant contribution to the quality of student learning in a specific area of responsibility over a sustained period, whether they are academic staff, general staff, sessional staff or institutional associates.

The University of Wollongong winners for 2007 are:

- Ms Maureen Bell – Centre for Educational Development and Interactive Resources
- Professor Patrick Crookes – Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences
- Dr Deslea Konza – Faculty of Education
- Dr Gary Noble – Faculty of Commerce
- Dr Anne Porter – Faculty of Informatics



UOW Vice-Chancellor, Professor Gerard Sutton (front row, far left) and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International), Professor Rob Castle (back row, far right) with Carrick winners: Back row – Martin Smith, Professor Julie Steele, Maureen Bell, Dr Anne Porter, Dr Deslea Konza; and front row – Sally Rogan, Philip Dawson, Dr Gary Noble, Professor Rob Whelan and Professor Patrick Crookes.

- The PASS Team – Ms Sally Rogan and Mr Phillip Dawson - Student Services
- Mr Martin Smith – Careers Service
- Professor Julie Steele – Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences
- Professor Rob Whelan – Faculty of Science

For the awards, each Australian university was allowed to put forward a maximum of 10 candidates for a pool of 250 awards. Only three Australian universities received more citations than the University of Wollongong.

The variety in contributions was particularly notable this year in that academic and non-academic staff received recognition.

In announcing this round of awards, the Minister said that Australia's higher education sector enjoyed an international reputation for high-quality services.

"It is vital that we continue to strive for excellence in teaching to maintain and build on that reputation. The Carrick Awards play an important role in recognising those who have reached high standards of teaching excellence," she said. **BG**

Prestigious award for CEDIR academic

Ray Stace has received one of the education sector's most prestigious awards – an Australian College of Educators Award for Outstanding Achievement in Education.

The Manager of Educational Systems Development at UOW's Centre for Educational Development and Interactive Resources (CEDIR) was officially recognised at a ceremony held in Wollongong, where he was joined by Faculty of Education Dean Professor Paul Chandler and Associate Professor Garry Hoban.

The award (which is co-sponsored by the Faculty of Education) is given annually to educators working in primary or secondary schools, TAFE, colleges or universities and recognises a commitment to high-quality teaching and excellence over the course of a career. A select few UOW academics have received the award in the past.

The selection process involves each teacher being nominated and then submitting a portfolio and undergoing a rigorous investigation by the award team that visits that teacher's classroom and interviews parents, students and colleagues.

Mr Stace has been an educator for 35 years, having begun as a primary school teacher in 1972. Since 1986, he has been working at UOW, initially to educate staff in the use of computers as they switched from typewriters to desktop computers.



Ray Stace

For the past 18 years, Mr Stace has been assisting academic teaching staff with the design and development of computer-based resources for their teaching. Over those years, he has assisted in the design and development of hundreds of such resources.

Mr Stace was nominated by UOW Honorary Fellow Dr Brian McCarthy, who worked with him for more than 15 years. **RC**

PNG recognises contribution to peace

Professor Ted Wolfers has returned to his academic career at UOW after nine years on secondment to the Papua New Guinea Government, with a number of national awards for his contribution to the peace process on the previously war-torn island of Bougainville.



Professor Ted Wolfers

Professor Wolfers, who has a 40-year association with PNG, was an adviser to the Pre-Independence Constitutional Planning Committee that framed the Constitution for the nation's independence in 1975. He also worked for a committee looking at the Bougainville conflict after it erupted in the late 1980s into widespread violence that cost 15-20,000 lives, and then when a regional peace-keeping force was set up for peace talks in 1994.

In 1997, the PNG Government asked him to return on secondment as an adviser to the peace process that resulted in the *Bougainville Peace Agreement* and the constitutional amendments that allowed for the election of an Autonomous Bougainville Government in 2005. He then continued to work as an advisor to senior PNG Ministers and bureaucrats as they worked through the complexities of establishing the Autonomous Government, and beginning the transfer of power in Bougainville, as well as reporting to the United Nations Security Council.

In recognition of his contribution, Professor Wolfers received one of PNG's highest honours when he was made a Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George in 2002. PNG's Minister for Bougainville Affairs Sir Peter Barter also presented him with a 30th Anniversary Independence Medal at the end of 2006, shortly before he returned to the University.

In September he was made a Companion of the Star of Melanesia, one PNG's two highest honours. **NH**

Picone leads NSW Health

University of Wollongong Professor Debora Picone AM has been appointed Director-General of NSW Health.

Announcing the appointment in June, Health Minister Reba Meagher described Professor Picone as a highly respected healthcare leader with an outstanding record of achievement as a senior executive healthcare administrator in NSW.

Prior to her appointment, Professor Picone had been chief executive of the South Eastern Sydney and Illawarra Area Health Service (SESAHS).

In this role she had been a major supporter of the establishment of UOW's Graduate School of Medicine (GSM), which opened this year.

UOW Vice-Chancellor Professor Gerard Sutton congratulated Professor Picone on her appointment, and said the



Professor Debora Picone

University owed her a great debt for her support for the GSM.

"As chief executive of the SESAHS, Debora Picone has been a great ally and supporter of our efforts to establish the Graduate School of Medicine," Professor Sutton said.

Terry Clout has replaced Professor Picone as SESAHS CEO. Mr Clout, a UOW Arts graduate and former employee of the University, is an experienced health administrator who had been based in Northern NSW since 2000. **NH**



Associate Professor Sue Stanton

Lingiari Lecturer

UOW Associate Professor Sue Stanton combined with Reconciliation Australia Co-Chair Fred Chaney to present the 8th Vincent Lingiari Memorial Lecture on 11 August at Charles Darwin University in the Northern Territory.

As this year marks the 40th anniversary of the 1967 referendum that gave Australian citizenship to indigenous people, the theme of the lecture was *40 years since the Referendum: Walking into the future and learning from the past*.

Professor Stanton followed in the

footsteps of previous notable speakers – Sir William Deane, Gough Whitlam, Galarrwuy Yunupingu, Patrick Dodson, Malcolm Fraser, Brian Manning and Linda Burney.

This year organisers of the Memorial Lecture changed the format from a single speaker to two presenters acknowledging the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The Vincent Lingiari Memorial Lecture commemorates the Wave Hill Station walk-off led by Vincent Lingiari with his Gurindji people and other groups in August 1966 – a catalyst for Aboriginal people across Australia in their fight for rights to traditional lands.

Professor Stanton is an Indigenous Australian historian from UOW's School of History and Politics and a member of the Kungarakan-Gurindji nations who was born in Larrakia country.

Vincent Lingiari was a member of the Gurindji people from the Northern Territory's Victoria River District. He died in 1988. **BG**

Projects connect with community

Community projects in the Illawarra ranging from mental health to the development of a strategic response to climate change are being funded under UOW's Community Engagement Grants Scheme.

The scheme was introduced in 2005 to encourage and support collaborative University-community projects, and this year's successful applicants were announced by Community Engagement Committee Chairperson David Morgan Williams at a ceremony in August.

The scheme provides funding to UOW staff and students for projects that are collaborative, consistent with UOW's Community Engagement Strategic Plan and have a clear community benefit. Funding is awarded on a competitive basis.

Projects receiving funding assistance this year include:

- Increasing UOW's linkage with private psychologists within the general community (Mr Chris Allan, Northfields Clinic – Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences)
- Empowering the community to respond to inappropriate alcohol marketing (Professor Sandra Jones, Centre for Health Initiatives – Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences)
- Evaluating and capacity-building among members of the Lord Mayor's Light and Hope Clubhouse for people with mental illness (Professor Frank Deane – Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences)
- The impact of climate change and community based strategic response in the Illawarra/South Coast region (Professor Colin Woodroffe, Faculty of Science)



Pictured at the Community Engagement Grants Scheme announcements with Vice-Chancellor Professor Gerard Sutton (3rd from right) are winning recipients (left to right) Chris Allan, Associate Professor Ian Brown, Ekaterina Pechenkina, Professor Colin Woodroffe, Professor Sandra Jones, Professor Frank Deane and Gabriel Watts.

- The creation of a range of multimedia legal advocacy resources for young people (Gabriel Watts, Faculty of Law)
- A *Voices of Children* project which will provide Indigenous students attending primary and secondary schools in the Shoalhaven area with opportunities for exploring their identities (Associate Professor Ian Brown, Faculty of Education). **RC**
- Improving intercultural relationships between Illawarra youth and international students through a series of international student visits to local high schools (Ekaterina Pechenkina, WUPA)

New magazine showcases students' skills



Vice-Chancellor Professor Gerard Sutton (centre) launches the Journalism students' magazine. He is pictured with the editorial team and Journalism Lecturer Marcus O'Donnell (right).

A new magazine produced by University of Wollongong students came in for lavish praise at its launch at the Faculty of Creative Arts in August.

paper,rock is the brainchild of Journalism students Ben Morgan, Sarah Lucre and Donna Kilby, who headed up a team of journalism, graphic design and marketing students to produce the 48-page glossy magazine.

The first edition is packed with in-depth features and stories about university life, as well as interviews and reviews on films, music and new technology. There is a fashion section and even a page about wine (cask wine, presumably catering for student budgets).

Contributors include journalism students and prominent publishing industry names, including wine writer Greg Duncan Powell and *Sydney*

Morning Herald Young Novelist of the Year Tara June Winch.

The production team commissioned stories and photographs, edited the stories, designed the pages and sold advertising to support the magazine, which also received funding support from the University.

Two thousand copies of the first edition have been printed and distributed throughout the UOW Campus. A second edition will be produced before the end of the year.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Gerard Sutton, said he had not seen a better student publication from any university or School of Journalism in Australia.

"It's a really exciting and innovative initiative," Professor Sutton said. "And the best thing is that the idea didn't come from my office or from the head of the Journalism School. The idea came from three creative students – Donna, Ben and Sarah.

"(Journalism Lecturer) Marcus O'Donnell and (Vice-Principal, Administration) Chris Grange supported them, and they enlisted journalism,

graphic design and marketing students ... cutting across Faculty boundaries. We have all the skills needed to produce a publication of this high quality, but it needed to be harnessed ... and that has been done." **NH**

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