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Encounter

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM FLINDERS UNIVERSITY

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Young South Australian of the Year, Khadija Gbla, undertakes volunteer work with refugees and young people when she is not studying Law and International Studies at Flinders University.
Photo: Ashton Claridge

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Turning pain into a positive

Khadija Gbla has seen things no child should endure.



Khadija Gbla with Young South Australian of the Year Award

Born in war-torn Sierra Leone in 1988, Ms Gbla can still remember the moment her father was shot dead before her eyes when she was just five years old.

“There are some things you never forget,” Ms Gbla, now 23, said.

“It’s one thing to be a child and see people killing each other but it’s another thing entirely to watch your own flesh and blood die, to know you don’t have a single picture of them, to have their memories fade and the sound of their voice disappear.

“I lost my innocence at a very young age and from that moment on I saw the world in a different light.”

Almost eight years after the civil war broke out in 1991, Ms Gbla, her mother and sister finally managed to flee Sierra Leone “with just the clothes on our backs” and sought refuge in neighbouring Gambia.

They stayed there for three years before migrating to Australia in 2001 under the country’s refugee program.

Battling chronic fatigue and post traumatic stress disorder, it took some time for the then 13-year-old to adjust to the Australian way of life.

“People think just because you cross the border and come to Australia you’ve landed in paradise but we were carrying baggage – unseen baggage that doesn’t just go away,” she said.

“I was just a traumatised kid trying to stay in school and keep up with everyone else, which wasn’t easy considering English was my third language.”

Against all odds, she completed her secondary education and is now about to enter her final year of a combined degree in Law and International Studies at Flinders University.

Besides being a diligent student, daughter and sister, Ms Gbla has become a role model, mentor and advocate for hundreds of teenagers in Australia and beyond.

Whenever she’s not on campus, the seasoned traveller tours the country and the world, delivering awe-inspiring speeches at schools, universities and conferences.

A passionate advocate for all minority groups – “I’m not just limited to the refugee story” – Ms Gbla also advises on a number of boards and committees and spends what free time she has volunteering for various organisations including Multicultural Youth SA and Shine SA.

These acts of selflessness earned Ms Gbla the title of 2011 *Young South Australian of the Year* in November.

“I don’t think I deserved it more than anyone else, I think we’re all doing what we can to make SA great but for me it’s always been about giving back to the place that’s given me so much,” she said.

While her passion for the plight of refugees is clear, Ms Gbla’s eyes become extra bright when she talks about her latest project – a magazine for young African women.

Chocolate Magazine will cover the usual topics of fashion, health and beauty but between the pages will be a more serious side, tackling such issues as female genital mutilation, bullying and domestic violence.

“I want this magazine to be something these young women can relate to and take ownership of because they deserve it,” Ms Gbla said.

“These are young women who have been raped, who look in the mirror and want to kill themselves, who feel like they’re covered in blood, other people’s blood, who wake up in the middle of the night thinking a bomb has been dropped on them, only to remember they’re not in Africa anymore.

“These are the stories I want to tell, not of victims but survivors, people who are choosing to live day by day and I want to help them in that journey.”

Ms Gbla is now looking for sponsors to get behind *Chocolate Magazine*, as well as photographers, editors, designers and writers to mentor the African women involved in the publication.

“I’m not looking for recognition or a fancy job at the end of my degree, I just want to know every night when I go to bed I’ve made some small difference in the world – that’s my life goal, my destiny,” she said.

Emily Charrison

Teaching old cells new tricks

Tricking old muscle cells into thinking and behaving like they are young, fit and healthy is the main aim of a four-year research project fresh out of Flinders University.

Senior Research Fellow Dr Robyn Meech from Flinders Clinical Pharmacology has just won a \$695,000 grant from the Australian Research Council's prestigious *Future Fellowships* scheme to investigate a way to make old stem cells new again by modifying their environment.

Based on evidence from animal studies, Dr Meech said old muscle stem cells can be reprogrammed to act like young, healthy stem cells when they are placed in a young environment.

"Research has shown that when you put an old cell into a young environment, that environment – or niche – will send signals to the cell membrane to tell it to act like a young cell," Dr Meech said.

"These signals determine how the cell functions but they're modifiable, so the idea is that if we give old cells in an old environment the same signal that's sent to cells in young environments then the old cells will behave young," she said.

By understanding how stem cells and their niche interact, Dr Meech said older cells could be reprogrammed to better repair themselves and increase muscle mass – resulting in particular benefits to the elderly and people with muscle-wasting diseases such as muscular dystrophy.

"If we can use a drug, for example, to reproduce the signal that's sent to cells in young environments we might be able to trick

the old cell into thinking it's in a young and healthy environment so it will behave accordingly," she said.

"The other alternative is to find a way to send stem cells through the blood vessels to hone in on where they're needed but that raises the question of how the cells would know where to go."

Although the investigation aims to discover new therapies for disease and age-related muscle degeneration, the Future Fellow said her research could also apply to stem cell reprogramming in other areas of the body such as the brain and heart.

"In general, tissues share common signalling mechanisms that make cells behave in a certain way, so this research could also be very important for, say, cardiac repair," Dr Meech said.

"But when it comes to muscle stem cells, it's not a really widely investigated area in Australia and although people have been trying to find treatments for muscle-wasting diseases for years, we still don't have anything effective," she said.

"I think that underscores the fact that we still need more basic information about how the stem cells and their niche talk to each other."

Emily Charrison

The sobering reality of entertaining our troops

John Schumann accepts there is an inherent irony in his being invited to perform for Australian soldiers in Afghanistan.

The recipient of a Flinders Distinguished Alumni Award has a number of claims to fame: as former lead singer of iconic Australian band Redgum; or as the political upstart who came close to taking the federal seat of Mayo, held at the time with a comfortable margin by Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer, in the 1998 federal election.

But, arguably, it is as the writer of *I was only nineteen* – the chart-topping, anti-war anthem about the experiences of a young soldier in the Vietnam War, judged one of the top 30 Australian songs of all time – for which Mr Schumann is best known.

“The truth is *I was only nineteen* remains a very important song inside the Australian Defence Force (ADF), much more so than I realised,” Mr Schumann said.

“Surprisingly, it’s held in great regard by younger members of the ADF who in lots of instances weren’t alive during the Vietnam War or who were very, very young when the song was popular,” he said.

Vehemently opposed to war – “the idea that some human beings can pick up arms and seek to visit death and injury on

others is inconceivably horrible” – Mr Schumann nevertheless understands that as long as war is “a feature of the human condition”, soldiers will be necessary.

“Everybody I engage with in the military is in no doubt that I rue that they are necessary. They are also in no doubt that I am very much understanding and supportive of them,” he said.

“I think that’s an easy distinction to make and operate within.

“My position is that Australians can and, in some instances, do have a moral obligation to protest our country’s involvement in a conflict. But we must always respect and support the men and women we send into that conflict. We made that mistake in Vietnam and I don’t think we will make that again.”

His well-aided views on this subject may have led to the initial resistance in some quarters to the idea of *John Schumann and the Vagabond Crew* first being invited to perform to Australian peace-keeping troops in East Timor in 2009.

“We did what we do when we play here in Australia. We talked about the songs, introduced them, told stories and jokes. The truth is we went down a storm and, on the basis of the response, we were invited to go to Afghanistan.”

There was little fanfare ahead of the band’s visit to Kabul and Tarin Kowt in late September and early October.

“Members of the Taliban monitor mobile phone, email, Facebook and Twitter traffic to get as much information as they can about who is going where,” Mr Schumann said.

Still flying high with BAE

Christine Zeitz’s career didn’t exactly get off to a flying start. At the interviews arranged by Flinders for its final-year economics and accountancy students with the major employers in the field, many students get “picked up”: Christine found herself passed over.

She then wrote to dozens of accounting firms and did find a taker, only for the job offer to be withdrawn just before she sat her exams.



But after registering with an accountancy placement service her luck changed, and within weeks of leaving Flinders, she had found work in the finance section of the Australian arm of multinational company British Aerospace, now known as BAE Systems.

“Lo and behold, that was January 1990, and I’m still here,” Ms Zeitz said.

Her original duties – sorting through and entering claims for expenses – are a far cry from her current role: a member of BAE System’s Board of Management, she is Director of Business Development and Director of Defence Logistics.

The company has changed too.

At the time she joined, Ms Zeitz said the company had a turnover in Australia of around \$100 million and employed some 300 people.

“Now we have a turnover of close to two billion dollars with 6,000 people, so it’s been a fantastic journey,” Ms Zeitz said.

There was only one major bump in the road; after holding a variety of roles and winning promotions which took her close to the top of the finance section, Ms Zeitz felt she had run out of options for advancement, and decided to resign. But instead, she was persuaded to move across to marketing, taking up a role in which she undertook pricing and estimating for BAE’s bid submissions.

“Over the next 15 years I moved through different roles within what we call ‘commercial’, becoming commercial director in 2000.”

Her current portfolio includes relations with government, and in a company that derives more than 90 per cent of its sales to the

“We were led to understand that it would be a very significant PR coup for the ‘bad guys’ if they were able to bring down a plane with a bunch of infidel entertainers onboard.”

En-route, the band members underwent a series of security and operational briefings which lasted about 12 hours at the ADF airbase at Al Minhad in the United Arab Emirates where they were issued with helmets and flak jackets (“very hot, very heavy and very uncomfortable”), learnt about IEDs (improvised explosive devices) and how to apply a tourniquet with one hand.

Mr Schumann said the arrival at Kandahar airbase aboard a Hercules aircraft after a five hour flight was “mind-blowing”.

“There, surrounded by sand, more sand and huge mountains, the military might of the western world is assembled.

“Home to 35,000 military personnel, with 300-400 aircraft lined up at the busiest one-strip airport in the world. It’s huge.”

John Schumann and the Vagabond Crew were very well-received by the troops at each of their five performances. Lucky for them, and unlike the band *Amy Meredith* who were also on the tour, the performances were not interrupted by rocket fire.

“It was exhilarating, exhausting, instructive, depressing and inspirational. All of those things, all at once,” Mr Schumann said.

The nine-day trip has enhanced his admiration for the men and women of the ADF but also spurred some soul-searching.

“The soldiers there feel they are making a difference. They talk about their joy in seeing little girls being able to attend school.

“But flying into that barren landscape...

there are seeming contradictions between the military might of the west and the modest resources available to the Taliban.

“In February, Hugh McDonald and I played at the funeral of Sapper Jamie Larcombe who died in Tarin Kowt. Looking at this box surrounded by soldiers wearing armbands, looking at the grieving parents, I wondered, ‘what’s it for?’. He was just a country boy from Kangaroo Island.”

Vincent Ciccarello



Photo: ABIS Jo DiIorenzo

Lieutenant Colonel Ian Robinson and John Schumann

government, with the Australian Defence Force as the prime customer, it’s a vital role.

While BAE Systems do supply military hardware, around half of their income derives from so-called sustainments, the maintenance and support of weapons systems.

“We are working on a bid worth \$700 million at the moment,” Ms Zeitz said.

She said that she doesn’t find the responsibility daunting.

“Having had a 20 year gradient, it’s never been a jump from the small to the very big,” Ms Zeitz said.

Her work has taken her to several overseas postings, and she also found time to marry and have two children.

She said her experience in a senior role with young children has given her a special interest in women in the workforce, and on the BAE management board she acts as the champion for diversity and inclusion.

“I’m really quite enthused about the dialogue that’s going on in society and business around diversity and gender, such

as the ASX guidelines to increase female representation on boards,” she said.

“As we look at how we attract and retain female talent and try to encourage women into senior roles, what I lived through informs me very well for discussing it.

“We’ve moved to a point in our company where the key enabler for having women come through in senior roles is flexibility.”

In her business development role, Ms Zeitz is looking at new strategies for growth at a time when traditional defence markets are declining.

The company’s response has been to move into adjacent markets, such as security.

“My function supports the strategic rationale to plan and approve these moves,” Ms Zeitz said.

But, she said, the stress doesn’t keep her awake at night.

“The secret is you need to have good people, and I have a great team.”

Charles Gent



Photos: BAE Systems

Leading young engineers to altruistic deeds

It doesn't quite have the same ring as Médecins Sans Frontières, nor the public profile, but the not-for-profit organisation Engineers Without Borders (EWB) similarly seeks to improve the quality of life of some of the world's most disadvantaged people.

One of the Australian organisation's initiatives, the EWB Challenge, brings together teams of first-year university students from around Australasia to design practical solutions to some of the basic infrastructure problems facing developing countries around the world.

This year – the third year in a row, in fact – a Flinders team will compete in the national final of the EWB Challenge, having trumped the competition at the South Australian showcase in November.

The team of Joseph Bramley, Daniel Davies, Claire Bandy and Benjamin Kirss (pictured) won for their project *Sustainable and Cost Effective Water Solutions*, which addressed the vital need for clean water in the southern Indian village of Devikulam with a simple and effective design.

Mechanical engineering student Benjamin Kirss said through reading and research, the team essentially “stumbled on” the basic element of their system – using copper as a purification tool.

“Our system uses a copper coil (to which bacteria will bind) to remove salmonella and E-coli from the water,” Mr Kirss said.

“It also has an activated carbon filter which removes the sediment and a sand filter, as well. So it removes pretty much everything undesirable,” he said.

The design has the great advantage of being able to be assembled *in situ*.

“The most difficult thing would be getting the copper itself. But the carbon filter can be made from burnt coconut shells and any fine grain sand would do.”

The problem of providing clean, drinkable water had some unexpected dimensions.

“At the moment, the people of Devikulam have access to bore water, which has high salinity, or using water from a nearby lake in which they wash animals and themselves. As you can imagine, it's not too sanitary,” Mr Kirss said.

“We also had to take into account their religious and cultural customs. We had to avoid using certain things or compelling them to go to certain places.



“It was also important to ensure that it was a family activity.” Mr Kirss said the group work was “definitely different” and he attributes the team's success to their ability to get along.

“I know other groups had trouble. But we worked really well together. Claire and Joseph focused on preparing a 60-page project report while Daniel and I worked on the water purification prototype.”

But, as Mr Kirss explains, the team didn't exactly have a choice when it came to taking part.

“The EWB Challenge is incorporated into the Flinders syllabus now, as the main assignment of the Professional Skills for Engineers subject,” Mr Kirss said, without any reservation.

“I found it fantastic. It's impacting positively on other people and improving our skill set,” he said.

“Being able to develop something that improves the way of life of people less privileged than you and helping them to utilise it...that would be great.”

Associate Professor Kenneth Pope, Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) in the School of Computer Science, Engineering and Mathematics said the EWB Challenge provided a fantastic opportunity for new students.

“While many of their topics focus on specific technical areas, the Challenge encourages them to think about the big picture, deal with complexity, weigh up alternatives and see connections,” Associate Professor Pope said.

“It provides real experience in a real team, which is great preparation for their future employment. And for teams like the SA champions, it gives a vital sense of achievement, knowing they are one of the best six teams formed from over 8400 first-year students across Australia and New Zealand,” he said.

As SA champions, the team will compete at the EWB Challenge National Finals in Perth in December, held at the Australasian Association of Engineering Educators conference.

Vincent Ciccarello

A lake near Devikulam.

Changing public health's approach to obesity

We all have a pretty good idea of how to avoid becoming overweight; you have to make sure that your intake of energy does not exceed your output.

The problem, according to Professor John Coveney (pictured), is that the public health message of eating less and exercising more simply isn't translating into action.

Professor Coveney, a public health academic at Flinders, was one of five speakers at a public forum on weight and body image held at Australia House in London organised by Flinders. Other speakers included Professor Lynne Cobiac, Deputy Chief of CSIRO Food and Nutritional Sciences, and Flinders graduate, Oxford doctoral candidate and Menzies Scholarship winner, Amy McLennan.

The forum was attended by invited guests and members of Flinders UK alumni, and was followed the day after by a workshop chaired by Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) David Day, which discussed the strategies for obtaining funding for Flinders-UK research collaborations in the area of food, nutrition and body image.

Professor Coveney said that even though the diet and lifestyle message may be straightforward, the circumstances of modern life mitigate against its adoption.

"Behavioural interventions can only go so far, because we live in an environment that is saturated with mechanisms that make us and keep us fat," he said.



Professor Coveney said we are wedded to sedentary lifestyles with effects that are becoming clear, as demonstrated by Professor Cobiac's statistical overview of the international rates of overweight and obesity. By most calculations, Australia now has the highest rate of overweight and obesity of any developed nation after America.

Ms McLennan talked about her field work in Nauru, where she has been researching the prevalence of diabetes linked to high rates of overweight and obesity. She pointed to a heavy reliance on imported, processed foods and the development of a cultural norm of being heavily overweight.

"They have a culture now that has absorbed the problem that we too are becoming more accepting of," Professor Coveney said

"If you take normality to mean more than 50 per cent, it's now abnormal not to be fat. And it's very hard to stay out of the orbit that everybody else is moving in."

When a lifestyle is so entrenched and embedded, behavioural messages are bound to be ineffectual, Professor Coveney said.

"We are living in an environment that doesn't endorse the lifestyle changes that are needed. Apart from a cosy glow of virtue, what is the reward?"

Professor Coveney said that persisting with conventional approaches or intensifying the message was a waste of resources.

"In public health what we have done traditionally and successfully is to identify and isolate the problem and then develop mechanisms that directly address it – we find and identify the germ, we find the antibiotic that kills it or we develop a vaccine that protects us from getting it," he said.

But obesity, like tobacco control, is an issue that doesn't respond to head-on approaches. Professor Coveney said that the problem needs to be addressed by other means.

"If you think about seat belts, road safety and smoking, the most important and influential public health campaigns have been the ones that have a fairly strong dose of legislation and regulation," he said.

"Measures about better labelling of food, addressing food advertising, making physical activity easier in workplaces; that's where we're going to get the mileage and that's where the energy should be going."

Charles Gent



A photograph of four people standing in front of a yellow banner that reads "Flinders University Business Plan Competition Dinner". From left to right: a man in a light blue shirt and glasses, a woman in a white blazer and patterned scarf, a man in a dark suit and red tie, and a man in a grey button-down shirt.

Chancellor has bold vision for future

From left: Chancellor Stephen Gerlach (second from right) with Flinders Business Plan competitors Zhan Li, Kaitlyn Bradey and Jayden Smith

Flinders University and Stephen Gerlach are both products of the dynamic sixties.

The University Chancellor was a young lawyer building a career that would take him to the boardrooms of some of Australia's most successful companies.

At the same time Flinders was forging a reputation as a bold and innovative teaching and research institution – a university that was prepared to be brave and different.

It's a way of operating that Mr Gerlach is determined to encourage as the University closes on its 50th anniversary in 2016.

He's taken over the role from former State Governor Sir Eric Neal during a period of great change for the tertiary sector. Universities are facing new challenges that require careful strategic positioning and good management – and Mr Gerlach is highly qualified to contribute.

"I think the cumulative experience over most of my working life – while not in the tertiary sector – has left me well positioned to deal with the challenges of being Chancellor of Flinders University," he says.

"Most of my working life I've been involved in organisations and industry sectors that have been undergoing major transformation and changes in strategic direction.

"To have a successful organisation – no matter what area it's involved in – you need to strive for excellence in culture, have good governance in how it's managed, excellent planning across the board, including strategic, operational, financial, resources and risk management, and excellence in people."

Mr Gerlach has acquired high level experience in all these areas during an impressive career that spans multiple sectors. He was a partner in one of Adelaide's largest law firms, Finlaysons, for 23 years, including six years as Managing Partner before he left in 1991.

He then moved into corporate consulting roles with different organisations and on major projects around the world. At the same time he was invited onto various company boards and chaired several, including Santos, Elders, Southcorp, Challenger Listed Investments, Amdel and Penrice.

In recent years Mr Gerlach has reduced his corporate involvement but continues to use his expertise and business skills supporting non-profit organisations.

He is currently a Trustee of the Australian Cancer Research Foundation, Chairman of Foodbank South Australia, a Director of Foodbank Australia and is a former Chairman of the Australian Red Cross Society in South Australia.

In all these corporate and community roles, Mr Gerlach has always taken a big picture perspective, with the future very much in mind.

And he sees a great future for Flinders – a time to be bold and daring – as the South Australian economy grows with new mines, defence projects, oil and gas ventures and further concentration of agriculture.

Strategically Flinders must continue to pursue excellence in teaching, research and innovation – these are all critical to its success – but its essential reason has to be far more than just that," he says.

"It must make a real contribution to the community in which it operates and be a catalyst in the potential development of a healthy, well-educated and prosperous society.

"And we must be looking beyond our own community to Australia and internationally and have a broader role in areas such as freedom of speech and debate, the pursuit of truth, pure research and the development of individual thinkers."

While Mr Gerlach's outlook is global, he's also very focused on developing a "healthy heart and soul" for the University which embraces the staff, students and, equally important, the alumni.

"There's a significant effort being made by the University to reach out to our alumni and connect with our extended Flinders family," he says.

"We watch the successes of our graduates with great interest and pride and want to re-engage them and invite them to be involved in the University and its endeavours."

Mr Gerlach says this might be in the form of role models or mentors, in aspects of the University's management or through financial support for new scholarships and strategic capital projects over the next five to 10 years.

"Under the current Vice-Chancellor – and supported by myself and the Council – we have taken steps to ensure we continue to focus on those things which have made the University so successful," he says.

"Being Chancellor of a significant tertiary institution gives me an opportunity to make a legacy contribution to both its present and future in a meaningful way. For me, that's a great motivation."

Ian Williams

Maths no barrier for battling Shaileigh



Miracle is an over-used word these days, but Shaileigh Page is living proof that they can happen.

Shaileigh spent the final weeks of 2011 fine-tuning her PhD thesis on teaching mathematics in primary schools and since 2007 has lectured on curriculum studies at Flinders School of Education.

On many levels, that's an extraordinary achievement.

For a start, Shaileigh was overwhelmed by the concept of maths in her early school years and despaired that she would ever grasp the basics.

But then she's battled amazing odds just to be here. Back in 1985 doctors held next to zero hope that she would live and, if she did, she would never walk, talk or achieve anything academically.

The miracles started when Shaileigh was conceived – her parents Jacqui and Roger were told that was impossible – and her brief life should have ended 13 weeks later when her mother's waters broke.

Jacqui refused to have the foetus aborted and after another 13 weeks of spasmodic labour and haemorrhaging she delivered Shaileigh – an 820 gram girl with massive medical problems.

"My parents were told I had a 0.5 per cent chance of survival," says Shaileigh. "Because I was so premature my lungs were not developed, I had a hole in my heart and my left hip was severely dislocated because the ball and socket hadn't developed."

Then some good news. The day before Shaileigh was due to have high risk surgery on her heart it was discovered the hole had closed.

But she was still on a ventilator because of her lungs and doctors warned she would probably end up blind because of the high levels of oxygen she was receiving.

"After 100 days on life support the medical opinion was that my lungs would never develop and I would be unable to breathe on my own," says Shaileigh. "With no hope left my parents made the agonising decision that the ventilator should be switched off."

It was – and little Shaileigh kept breathing. But her ordeal was far from over.

She endured 13 operations on her left hip before she was four years old, including one that nearly took her life.

A full body cast to keep her hip in place was put on too tight. She turned blue, her lungs collapsed, the hole reappeared in her heart and her liver was compressed.

"My first four Christmases were spent in hospital before I was allowed to go home for good and by that time I was old enough to go straight into kindergarten," says Shaileigh.

Then it was on to primary school where the miracles continued. Despite the earlier dire predictions, Shaileigh coped with the academic and physical challenges of school as well as anyone.

She was an enthusiastic basketballer and did well in most subjects – except maths.

"In my early years of primary school I really struggled in mathematics and by the end of most lessons I'd be close to tears," says Shaileigh.

It was in Year 4 that she received some advice that continues to shape her life.

"My teacher took me aside and said he could see I was struggling but that I had huge potential and that I would succeed if I kept persevering," she says.

The teacher gave her extra support and Shaileigh repaid the commitment by doing more homework. A similarly supportive teacher in Year 5 ensured that any barriers to further maths learning were completely removed.

It was an experience that inspired Shaileigh many years later to tackle a PhD.

Since completing an honours degree in Bachelor of Education Junior Primary and Primary at Flinders University she has been working on a thesis to investigate how teachers can better engage with students so that they succeed in mathematics. The focus is on 'powerful positive affect' which involves tapping into the beliefs, attitudes and emotions of students.

"I want to show that through engagement and persistence teachers can foster attitudes and beliefs in students that can lead to mathematical success," she says.

In between writing her thesis Shaileigh has been lecturing in integrated curriculum studies specialising in mathematics for junior primary and primary preservice teachers.

Every month you will also find her in the neonatal clinic at Flinders Medical Centre.

She's part of *Women Who Have Been There* and delivers a morale boosting message to young mothers with premature babies: "Just hang in there – because miracles really do happen."

Ian Williams



Laying down the law in London

Adina Fargher (BCom LLB/LP) studied commerce and law at Flinders University from 1997–2002 and is a Managing Associate at leading UK legal firm Addleshaw Goddard in London. Employing more than 1250 people, this firm is ranked 7th in the UK according to the number of its FTSE 100 clients, and focuses on jurisdictions where clients require international legal support such as Continental Europe, the Republic of Ireland, Scotland, North America, China as well as specific emerging economies.

Developing her interest in business and commerce whilst at school, Adina Fargher's study program in commerce/law allowed her to not only develop her interests in business, but also provided options to pursue different career directions. Ms Fargher knew of others who completed commerce degrees which opened the doors to different careers, including economics, accounting or various roles in finance. Supplementing her commerce program with a Bachelor of Laws and Legal Practice was, she said, "both a natural and complementary choice".

She chose to study at Flinders due to the good reputations of both the Commerce Department and the Law School. The Law School was still relatively new and was making a name for itself offering a Law degree which was modern, practical and equipped students with good skills for entering the workforce, either as a lawyer or in a non-legal career area. A key benefit of the Flinders Law degree was the Practical Legal Training (PLT) component, required to qualify as a lawyer, was included as part of the degree not as an add-on taken afterwards. Ms Fargher said that the lecturers and tutors throughout both degrees were very approachable and supportive, and keen to see their students succeed in their respective subjects and in the degrees as a whole.

After graduation, Ms Fargher was admitted as a barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court of South Australia and was already working at Fisher Jeffries as a legal clerk and continued there as a qualified lawyer. First she worked on high profile insolvency litigation cases, but because of her interests in

business and commerce, moved to Corporate and Commercial in the firm before moving to London in 2006.

As a Managing Associate at Addleshaw Goddard, her major role is to advise on corporate mergers and acquisitions and joint ventures, as well as undertaking other general corporate advisory work in a variety of sectors including financial services, pharmaceuticals and professional practices. Ms Fargher said "I act for leading UK companies and institutions and have undertaken work for clients in various international jurisdictions, including in key emerging markets of Africa including South Africa, Tanzania, and Kenya, as well as in the Netherlands, California and New York."

Her work has meant spending extended periods of time on secondments at key clients Legal Counsel, Legal Operations – UK, Pharmaceuticals Division at GlaxoSmithKline, and as Legal Counsel, Corporate/M&A, Group Legal at the Royal Bank of Scotland. Her experience includes working with Diageo the world's leading premium drinks business, international property consultancy King Sturge International LLP, Brake Bros Limited and Lloyds Banking Group.

Her experiences at Flinders University were challenging and rewarding, but also fun. Not only does she have a lot of fond memories from her time at Flinders, she has lasting friendships and contacts, some of whom are also working in London at the moment. Ms Fargher comments that her university studies gave her a solid foundation in terms of basic knowledge and a practical skill set from which to develop her career, and "the confidence to set myself high ambitions and to work hard to achieve them."

In her spare time, of which she says she has very little, Ms Fargher runs or walks in Hyde Park or Kensington Gardens, visits Portobello, goes to the theatre or one of the many museums in London. Dining out is also on the menu in a city where the choice and quality of the restaurants is second to none, as are occasional weekend city break trips to European cities such as Paris or Copenhagen.

In the longer term she sees herself living and working back in Australia. "The drawcard of the Australian lifestyle is going to be too hard to resist. London is fantastic but exhausting, and for the short term I see myself continuing to develop my career here," she said.

Geoff Sauer

Helping victims to find their way

It's nearly 30 years since Tony Waters completed his Graduate Diploma in Applied Psychology at Flinders, but he finds what he learnt back then is still useful in his current role.

Mr Waters is Chief Executive of Victim Support Services (VSS), the South Australian non-governmental organisation dedicated to supporting victims of crime.

"Within the degree I was looking mainly at counseling and at neuropsychology, and those two strands have obviously helped me in terms of the current work we do here – straight counseling and also how post-traumatic stress disorder affects the brain, and how that might cause people to react and behave," Mr Waters said.

"It's been quite useful and quite handy to have that foundation knowledge."

Regrettably it is violent crime, especially assault, which brings VSS many of its new clients.

The psychological effects on victims of violent crime are highly variable and almost impossible to predict, Mr Waters said.

"It can be quite shattering, and it can happen immediately after the event, or it could happen a year, or five years, later."

As well as providing counseling, VSS plays a major role in advocacy, both for individual victims and at broader, generic levels.

"We might advocate, for example, for sexual assault or domestic violence services or we may have a view on where things are at for child victims of crime; more recently we've been advocating our views on issues around social networking and cyberbullying," Mr Waters said.

The VSS also provides up to date information to victims of crime about matters such as compensation, and much of its role is in referring people to appropriate sources of assistance.

"What you find is a whole range of things can be affected; it could be housing, it could be family, it could be dealing with day-to-day functioning or mental health, so we do a lot of collaborative work with other organisations, and we try to build a holistic approach into our case-work management."

Mr Waters said that most victims have little or no experience of the courts and the criminal justice system.

"Some people are quite anxious and don't know what to expect, so we provide volunteers to offer court companionship."

VSS was founded 32 years ago as a voluntary organisation, but now receives substantial government funding to help in running its services through its main office in Adelaide and a network of seven regional offices.

Mr Waters, who also has a law degree, describes his job as complex, fascinating and constantly shifting.



"It's a moving feast, and involves interactions with the other stake-holders in the criminal justice system, be it the courts, the Director of Public Prosecutions, Correctional Services, offenders or SAPOL," he said.

Mr Waters said that while the media tend to have fixed views in its portrayal of crime and punishment, many victims are not bent on revenge.

"There are victims who truly want to be involved in the rehabilitation of the offender, and there are plenty of people who realise that offenders offend because of where they come from – their childhood, background and terrible things that have happened to them. Victims are probably more circumspect than the public knows."

Nonetheless, sentencing and the treatment afforded to victim impact statements do remain a source of concern.

"There is still a bit of variability as to how judges and courts treat victim impact statements, and that does sometimes cause what is technically known as secondary victimisation, so that the victim gets victimised again, as it were, by the response of the criminal justice system," Mr Waters said.

"We would like to work towards a minimum standard, or a code."

In addition to Mr Waters' background, there is another Flinders link to VSS, with several students from the University's social work and criminal justice degrees joining the organisation for placements.

"We are very serious about our obligations, and we try to provide an intensive placement in terms of a range of social work experience by integrating students seamlessly into the team," Mr Waters said. One former placement student and recent social work graduate, Alex Clarke, now works part-time with VSS.

Mr Waters said the criminal justice students typically undertake small research projects, such as compiling a compendium of crime statistics, that can inform VSS in its activities.

"It helps us get across a topic," Mr Waters said.

VSS can always use all the help it can get, Mr Waters said, and he urges anyone interested in the organisation's work to assist by becoming a member, volunteering or donating. The website is at www.victimsa.org

Charles Gent

Protecting Painted Dogs

Nikki Anderson has grown up around dogs her entire life – albeit the domestic kind.

Following a keen interest in carnivores she has developed an ambitious plan to help the plight of Africa's second-most endangered carnivore, the Painted Dog (*Lycaon pictus*), as part of a PhD project at Flinders University.

"I've been animal-centric my whole life," Mrs Anderson said.

"But I first became interested in Painted Dogs while working on a collaborative project between Flinders University and ZoosSA in 2008 when deploying satellite GPS collars on feral camels in the Gibson Desert," she said.

"It was here, listening to the howl of wild dingoes at night and a campfire discussion, that the seed for developing a project on this lesser-known but important canid had been planted."

In recent decades the number of Painted Dogs in the wild has significantly declined from a population of about 250,000 across the African continent to about 3,000.

Habitat loss and fragmentation, competition with other predators, susceptibility to disease, small population sizes and human influences such as snaring and persecution are all responsible for the decline.

In Australasia there are only nine zoos that hold Painted Dogs in captivity, with the two ZoosSA sites collectively having the largest regional population, including 24 dogs at Monarto Zoo and five at Adelaide Zoo.

Under her PhD project, Mrs Anderson aims to address a number of criteria that would put the region in a better position to consider developing a reintroduction program for this endangered carnivore.

The criteria, set by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), include a range of biological, socio-economic and legal requirements as well as plans for release and monitoring.

"While it's not my plan to personally reintroduce them into the wild, I do want to address some of the biological requirements outlined by the IUCN," Mrs Anderson said.

"Then hopefully one day they can be bred in captivity for a potential release," she said.

Providing greater linkage between "in situ" and "ex situ" conservation is another important element of the study, Mrs Anderson said.

The ex situ, or captive, aspect of her project focuses on the genetics of the Australasian Painted Dog population and a trial into the effectiveness of a vaccine for *Canine Parvovirus* as they are taxonomically distinct from domestic dogs.

A study trip to Africa is also being planned for late next year to improve conservation efforts for in situ, or wild, Painted Dogs between Zambia and Malawi, building upon the existing work being conducted by the Zambia Carnivore Programme.



Nikki Anderson and a Painted Dog

"I'm really excited about this particular aspect of my PhD because it will be an excellent experience to work with these animals in their native habitat, and carnivores in general," she said.

"With 15 of the world's large carnivores under significant threat and some predicted to become extinct within the next couple of decades, my view is why wait until they're extinct – why not try and address things now before it reaches that point."

Emily Charrison



Adelaide Festival of Ideas Closing Event:
2011 Investigator Lecture

*Charting a Course for Change:
The Politics of Progress*

presented by
The Hon. Mike Rann MP
Premier of South Australia



Investigating same sex marriages

Same-sex marriages is an idea whose time had well and truly arrived, according to South Australia's second longest serving Premier, Mike Rann. In one of his final addresses, the outgoing South Australian Premier voiced his support for legalising same-sex marriages when he delivered Flinders University's Investigator Lecture, *Charting a Course for Change: The Politics of Progress*. Mr Rann urged the Australian Parliament to amend the Marriage Act to provide full legal equality for homosexual couples.

"It is, quite simply, unfair to prevent same-sex couples from having their relationship – a union that is viewed as equal in every other aspect of the law – being recognised as a legal marriage...it is time that we recognise the validity of all genuine long-term relationships," Premier Rann said.

The Premier said such change would ensure Australia's reputation as a progressive and inclusive nation, characteristics of visionary former South Australian Premier Don Dunstan's reign. Mr Rann highlighted the many reforms initiated by the Dunstan Government including South Australia becoming the first state to grant Aboriginal land rights and the first to fully decriminalise homosexuality in 1975, following the drowning of law lecturer, George Duncan in the River Torrens. Mr Rann highlighted that it was under Dunstan's lead that modern multiculturalism flourished and his legacy enables us all to celebrate our diversity in background, opinion and lifestyle.

According to Mr Rann, Don Dunstan's retirement "marked the end of an era when our state was renowned not only for its preparedness to embrace ideas and reform, but for its capacity to transform them into practical reforms". He echoed Dunstan's approach, advocating the importance of focusing on future action and not reminiscing on past achievements. Mr Rann likened his government with that of Dunstan's, declaring "upon coming to office in 2002, our Government committed itself to cultivating new ideas so that South Australia could once again innovate and lead".

Mr Rann identified intellectual capital as a key asset his government sought to build in order to secure the State's future prosperity. Recognising the value of investing in this intangible resource to help position the State as an intellectual hub, the Rann Government implemented initiatives such as the Adelaide Thinkers in Residence Program, which has "secured investment worth hundreds of millions of dollars, and prompted many, many changes to legislation".

The Adelaide Thinkers in Residence program, instigated over eight years ago, has brought inspiring and innovative ideas



L-R: Associate Professor Robert Phiddian, Deputy Dean of Flinders School of Humanities and Chair of the Adelaide Festival of Ideas and Flinders University Lecturer, Barbara Hardy AO and Sandy Verschoor, Executive Producer, Adelaide Festival of Ideas

into the state from over 20 Thinkers and translated them into practical solutions. One example is Herbert Girardet, whose residency on greening Adelaide has seen impressive action on reducing our carbon footprint and soil erosion and increasing bio-diversity. Another is Baroness Professor Susan Greenfield whose residency initiated various programs designed to improve the scientific literacy of South Australians and encourage young people to embrace careers in science.

Mr Rann identified collaboration as a key component of the Thinkers program, facilitating the value-adding benefit of this investment. He continued by commending the collaboration between Flinders University and Flinders Medical Centre in establishing the Flinders Centre for Innovation in Cancer which incorporates the LIVESTRONG Cancer Research Centre. Mr Rann stated that this facility "will lead Australia in pioneering the early diagnosis, prevention, treatment survivability and support for people with cancer".

Mr Rann concluded by highlighting the importance of embracing new ideas in order to move forward by declaring, "we cannot let the relentless local clobbering machine, run by minority vested interests, to force South Australia to retreat once more into quiet complacency, or to accept genteel decline".

Daniela Ciocco



1. *Three Sisters*

No broken legs as Flinders

When they are up on stage in character and with costumes to match, some of the actors performing for Adelaide audiences may not be instantly recognisable as Flinders graduates. But the talent and skill that shines through is well recognised by directors and theatre companies alike and is testament to the quality of training offered at the University for nearly four decades.

Since the start of its professional acting and directing programs in 1975, graduates of the Flinders University Drama Centre have made and continue to make significant contributions to the performing arts industry, both nationally and internationally. Many of those alumni are involved in successful productions staged by the State Theatre Company, South Australia's flagship professional theatre company. In 2011 alone, 17 Flinders alumni appeared in productions in the State Theatre Company's 40th year.

State Theatre Company Associate Director and Flinders graduate, Catherine Fitzgerald, kicked off the season with Molière's *The Misanthrope*. This "stinging, zinging play about the perils of telling the truth in a world addicted to surfaces", showcased the talents of alumni Jude Henshall, Robert Tompkins, Brendan Rock, Eileen Darley and Caroline Mignone, all of whom studied at Flinders. Ending the season as brilliantly as she

commenced it, Fitzgerald delivered a superb performance in Tommy Murphy's *Holding the Man*, based on the autobiography of Australian actor and writer Timothy Conigrave, about growing up gay in the mid-seventies. Under the direction of Flinders Head of Acting, Rosalba Clemente, the cast, including Flinders graduates Nick Pelomis, Ellen Steele and Geoff Revell, performed outstandingly in a variety of roles, with some even crossing genders!

Fitzgerald's predecessor at State Theatre Company and Flinders graduate, Geordie Brookman, demonstrated extraordinary vision and talent in his direction of *Speaking in Tongues*, a play about the strangled communication that occurs between men and women. Similarly, director David Mealor who also studied at Flinders, showed his directing talent in *Buried Child*, a gripping story about a "bizarre and explosive family reunion".

Chekhov's *Three Sisters* was described as "one of the greatest plays of the



2. *Three Sisters*



3. *Misanthrope*

alumni entertain Adelaide

20th century, a tragi-comic masterpiece of provincial claustrophobia and the frustrations of small town life which has a universally resounding appeal". The State Theatre Company production was the biggest for the 2011 season with a cast of 14 including 1979 graduate Geoff Revell along with other alumni Peter O'Brien, Ksenja Logos, Nadia Rossi, Roman Vaculik and Chris Asimos. In a performance with a smaller cast, graduate Peter Michell starred in *November* along with well known actor, Garry McDonald in a comedy set just days before a United States presidential election.

The strong relationship and synergy between the Flinders Drama Centre and State Theatre Company, together with shared values of fostering creativity and innovation provided a catalyst for initiating a partnership between the two. Pamela Foulkes, Chief Executive Officer of State Theatre Company said "the State Theatre Company is proud of its partnership with Flinders University.

As South Australia's major theatre company, we felt it particularly important to forge close ties with an educational institution with such a prestigious record in the training of this State's creative artists.

"Each year we welcome to the Company a wide range of talented artists who have studied at Flinders and what we can offer to South Australian audiences is considerably richer for their presence," Ms Foulkes said.

At the beginning of 2011, Flinders University committed to sponsoring the *Young Playwright's Award*, which encourages and acknowledges aspiring young South Australian playwrights aged up to 25 years. The joint winners of the award, two Adelaide writers Phillip Kavanagh (a postgraduate student at Flinders) and Flora Gaugg, spent a week work-shopping their plays with Catherine Fitzgerald before a staged reading was performed by a professional cast in front of an audience.

Photos:

1. Geoff Revell (standing behind table), Nadia Rossi (in pink, also standing behind table), Roman Vaculik (kneeling at front right) and Chris Asimos (standing directly behind Roman)

2. Peter O'Brien and Ksenja Logos

3. Jude Henshall

Photos: Matt Nettheim

Flinders University will continue its support of the State Theatre Company by becoming its *Education Partner* for 2012 and 2013, including support for the *Young Playwright's Award*. This support will provide opportunities for the next generation of playwrights and theatre professionals to develop their skills and knowledge in a creative and innovative environment through real-world experience.

Daniela Cirocco



Embracing and engaging Flinders alumni

APPOINTMENTS STRENGTHEN ALUMNI AND DEVELOPMENT STANCE

The University's capacity to engage alumni and develop income opportunities for Flinders has been given a boost through recent key staff appointments, according to Ms Christine Jenner, Head of the University's Development and Alumni Relations.

Simon Blight joined the team as Donor Relations Manager responsible for developing and building relationships with prospective individual and corporate donors via the appeal, major gifts and bequest programs.

As Project Officer, Daniela Cirocco supports University activities associated with development and alumni including specific projects related to industry, business and community partnerships.

"Simon and Daniela really complement the team which is focused on finding ways to fund significant investment in academic, research and innovation leadership objectives outlined in the Inspiring Flinders strategic plan," Ms Jenner said.

"They join Geoff Sauer, who is known to most alumni and continues to manage a strong, pro-active alumni program that encourages graduates to connect and engage with the university on an ongoing basis," she said.

"The Database and Research Officer role is performed admirably by Rob Wild who supports the ongoing programs of both alumni and donor development with accurate and insightful data so critical in today's business world."

She said Flinders University is absolutely committed to working with alumni and other key stakeholders in developing programs that engage stakeholders in support of University priorities through the Karmel Endowment Fund.

"The formation of the Development and Alumni team is evidence of that commitment and we encourage you to engage with the appropriate member of the team for any matter relating to your relationship with the University."

CONNECTING IN CANBERRA

The Karmel family's stunning collection of artwork made a wonderful backdrop to an alumni networking day in Canberra in May. Mrs Lena Karmel, the Patron of Flinders University's Karmel Endowment Fund, hosted a luncheon for our Canberra alumni, the genesis of which had been an alumni reception associated with Gooch Exhibition in 2010 at which our alumni indicated they would like to connect on a regular basis. Guests at the event included Chancellor, Stephen Gerlach, and Vice-Chancellor, Michael Barber. Alumni indicated they would like a Canberra network event in 2012 and alumnus, Bruno Yvanovich, agreed to work with the alumni relations team to bring this to fruition in September 2012. Please keep an eye out for our E-Ncounter, or check out our alumni events on the Flinders website for details as they are finalised. We look forward to seeing you there.

SINGAPORE AND KUALA LUMPUR

In March, Chris Jenner and Geoff Sauer visited Kuala Lumpur and Singapore to meet with alumni. This trip provided the opportunity for Chris Jenner as Head, Development and Alumni Relations to meet with alumni in those cities for the first time. Dinner meetings were held with both Flinders alumni committees, as well as individual meetings with Professor Kurunathan Ratnavelu (PhD '90), Deputy Vice-Chancellor



Photos: 1. L-R: Geoff Sauer, Rob Wild, Daniela Cirocco, Chris Jenner, Simon Blight.
 2. Nicky Beh, Professor Dr Ramattullah Khan, Dr Sity Daud
 3. Geoff Sauer, Chris Jenner, Professor Kurunathan Ratnavelu, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Development) at the University of Malaya.
 4. L-R: Katherine Bean, Professor Margaret Davies, Justice Jayne Jagot, Judge Peter McCusker, Brian Hayes QC.
 5. Steve Kirkbride and Jeff Mogg.
 6. L-R: Dr Sean Kim, Ms Chris Fanning, Dr Steve Brown, Professor Jane James.

(Development), University of Malaya, and Mr Teo Soo Chew (BEC '73) who is a Director of See Hoy Chan in Singapore.

Highlights of the visit included a lively Saturday morning alumni event at a car dealership in Kuala Lumpur and an informal lunch meeting with young Flinders Nutrition and Dietetics alumnae at National University Hospital in Singapore.

During visits to the University of Malaya and the National University of Singapore, meetings were held with alumni and development staff to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Meetings were held also with Austrade staff at the Australian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur where a number of potential opportunities for the Universities were identified.

LAW SCHOOL VISITING JUDICIAL FELLOW

Each year the Law School invites a Federal Court judge to be the Visiting Judicial Fellow in the School for a week and in 2011 the Fellow was the Honourable Justice Jayne Jagot. The Fellowship provides a valuable opportunity for staff and students to interact with a judge.

Justice Jagot was appointed to the Federal Court in 2008 having served as an acting Judge in the NSW Supreme Court (Equity Division) since 2006, and previously in the NSW Land and Environment Court. Graduating from the University of Sydney Law School with Distinction in 1991, and with what the Attorney General described as 'an embarrassing number and range of prizes' in 1991, she progressed rapidly through the ranks at Mallesons becoming partner in 1997. Justice Jagot was called to the bar in 2002 where she practised in a wide range of litigious, transactional and advisory matters

across environmental planning, local government evaluation, administrative, real property and tort law.

A Boardroom lunch was held in her honour at the Victoria Square Campus on 9 August.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN TOURISM AWARDS

Flinders University Tourism won the Tourism Education and Training category at the 2011 South Australian Tourism Awards. The award citation described Flinders University Tourism as "a national leader in tourism teaching, research, and industry and community involvement" which provides "an exciting, dynamic and supportive environment for students and staff, flexible and innovative topics and programs, extensive experience and expertise in research that meets industry needs, and the most strategic industry placement program in Australia".

Accepting the Award, Flinders Head of Tourism, Dr Steve Brown, said: "This award is a testament to the dedication and extraordinary hard work of a very small teaching team – Chris Fanning, Dr Sangkyun Kim and Professors Jane James and Bill Spurr – our colleagues in the Flinders Business School and the general staff who support us, and the many industry partners who provide guest lecturers in our programs and placement opportunities for our students".

"But it is our students and our graduates who also deserve acknowledgment, because they are the ones who inspire us to continually improve," he said.

Flinders Tourism will represent the state in the tourism education category at the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards to be held in Cairns next March.

An inspiring and remarkable life

LESLEY SHORNE 1957-2010.

Dr Lesley Shorne was a women's health pioneer, Flinders University graduate, wife, mother, family woman and philanthropist, who worked tirelessly for the cause of women's health in South Australia for more than 25 years in both practice and promotion.

Since Lesley's death in 2010, her immediate and extended family have worked tirelessly to raise funds to create a scholarship in her honour, offered to female students in or commencing their third year of the graduate entry Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery program at Flinders University.

Flinders University and the Shorne Family are delighted to announce that Katherine Pensa was the inaugural recipient of the *Lesley Shorne Scholarship* which was presented at a recent dinner hosted by Lesley's husband Dermot Holden and her sister Dorothy Shorne and other members of the Shorne family including Edward, Penelope and Priscilla Shorne.

Professor Paul Worley, Dean of the School of Medicine, said that "this Scholarship will encourage bright and compassionate mature women to consider that a career in medicine is possible, despite the many obstacles that may be present. Lesley Shorne's passion and commitment to women's health will live on in these extraordinary scholarship recipients for years to come. We are grateful for the generosity of the Shorne Family".



Above: Lesley Shorne

Below: L-R: Sue Bishop, Tony Goldsworthy, 'Matthew Flinders'

ALUMNI SURVEY 2011

Early in 2011 alumni were invited to participate in a survey which looked at alumni attitudes towards a number of factors and issues including motivations for enrolling, communication strategies, supporting Flinders and attendance at functions and events. Almost 1000 alumni responded, and the survey data was analysed independently of the University.

Ninety seven percent of respondents indicated that they would recommend Flinders to others and the motivations for coming to Flinders included range of courses, reputation and location. Alumni indicated that they are interested in events especially if they are related to professional/industry sectors, professional development or provide the opportunity to interact with academic staff. As well as supporting Flinders financially, particularly in creative arts and the Indigenous Health Research Fund, strong interest was expressed for mentoring and volunteering.

Suggestions about involving alumni in alumni activities as soon as possible after graduation and getting current students involved with alumni are now being actively pursued. Planning for alumni relations activities in 2012 and beyond builds on the feedback from our alumni including opportunities for career development, interaction with industry leaders, improving member benefits, and connecting with alumni internationally.

We are always keen to receive feedback from alumni about the University or what we might be able to do for alumni. Simply send an email to alumni@flinders.edu.au with your comments.



40 YEAR REUNION

The inaugural 40 Year Reunion for 1967-1971 alumni was held in Red Vines, Flinders One (the former Union building) on 30 November. More than 90 alumni and guests attended, and heard from the Vice-Chancellor Professor Michael Barber about Flinders then, now and in the future, and Andrew McHugh, sometime *Empire Times* editor about the history of the paper. A specially recorded message from Flinders graduate John Schumann about his time at, and the influences of, Flinders was played. Special mention was made of John Moriarty AM, an outstanding Australian and our first Indigenous graduate, who was present. The unanimous sentiment of those present was for more such events, and there will be.

Authors: Chris Jenner, Geoff Sauer, Daniela Cirocco, Simon Blight

Flinders grows with China as new courses added

China sees education as central to its ability to meet its economic and social needs in the 21st century and it has embarked on an ambitious education reform agenda.

Some of the numbers involved are staggering by Australian standards: boost the number of students undertaking higher education by 16 per cent – to 35 million students – by 2020; increase participation in further or continuing education to almost double to 350 million students in the same timeframe. The ultimate goal? That 20 per cent of the working-age population will have finished higher education by 2020.

Higher education reforms in China may be focused on improving the supply of skilled and innovative professionals but the country's ambitions extend to mobilising its population to pursue lifelong learning opportunities and to engage with international universities and research organisations as a way of showcasing China's own universities.

Flinders University's presence in China is well-established – since 2000, more than 1900 students have graduated from Flinders courses taught in conjunction with Nankai University in Tianjin – and it is about to be stepped up.

Flinders is to add a third masters degree, a Master of Educational Leadership and Management, to the Master of Hospital Administration and Master of Arts (International Relations in Economics and Trade) courses already taught at Nankai University.

The existing courses have been highly successful and are used as quality benchmarks for foreign courses by the Chinese Ministry of Education.

The new two-year Masters course will offer its students the opportunity to learn about a range of issues affecting leadership and management in the educational setting, including human resource development, strategic thinking, governance and educational management.

It is intended for staff and leaders in schools, colleges and universities who are looking to obtain formal qualifications at Masters level.

Flinders Vice-Chancellor, Professor Michael Barber, said the addition of the new course is an indication of the regard in which Flinders is held and of the strength of the relationship with Nankai.

"This is the first time that an overseas university has run three postgraduate programs with a single institution in China," Professor Barber said.

"Our relationship with Nankai has gone from strength to strength and our graduation ceremony in China in October saw degrees awarded to more than 300 graduates, the largest number yet."

The visit to the graduation ceremony by senior Flinders staff, including the Chancellor, Mr Stephen Gerlach, and Ms Chris Jenner, Head of Development and Alumni Relations, also saw the presentation of the first two Distinguished Alumni Awards to graduates of the Flinders courses.

Ni Rong, who graduated from the Masters of Health Administration in 2008, is Head of the Health Bureau of Gongshu District, Hangzhou City. In this role, he has overseen improvements to health programs for 600,000 residents. The award-winning Gongshu model has become highly influential in China's national health care policy.

Xu Jingrong, a 2002 graduate of the Master of Arts (International Relations in Economics and Trade), is a Vice-President of the Bank of China, Tianjin Branch, with responsibility for the company finance section of the whole bank. Her service and leadership in the development of the bank's commercial operations have been recognised with numerous awards.

Professor Barber said making postgraduate courses available to professional staff is part of a drive across China to focus on educational qualifications as a way of ensuring staff are equipped with appropriate theoretical knowledge and exposure to modern practices.

Flinders' research links with China are also expanding through the joint Education and Research Centre with Hunan University and the Central South University in the city of Changsha in Hunan province.

The three institutions are providing seed funding of more than \$400,000 to support 14 collaborative Chinese-Australian research projects in health and environment, which range from an examination of risk factors associated with the use of wastewater in agriculture to a comparative study of dementia care in Changsha and Adelaide.

Vincent Ciccarello



Nankai alumni presented the Flinders graduation visitors (front) with a scroll

Healthy neighbourhoods equal healthy homes



When the Queensland floods surged through the city in January 2011, killing at least 20 people and destroying tens of thousands of homes, the hardest hit were those who were worse off to begin with, said Flinders University urban planning expert Dr Kathy Arthurson.

According to the Senior Research Fellow at Flinders Southgate Institute, where people live influences their health, wellbeing and ability to feel socially included.

“In Brisbane, a lot of the people who built houses on the floodplains were low-income earners and they probably built there because the land was cheap,” Dr Arthurson (pictured), who specialises in Prevention, Promotion and Primary Health Care, said.

“But when the floods hit they didn’t have insurance so they couldn’t rebuild, and it was the same story with Hurricane Katrina in the US – the people who suffered the most were already struggling to start with,” she said.

The economic, health and social impacts of the environment on vulnerable neighbourhoods is just one element of a new research project being led by Dr Arthurson following a \$591,408 award from the Australian Research Council’s *Future Fellows* program.

As part of the four-year Fellowship, Dr Arthurson will explore how housing and urban planning policies, including the creation of new neighbourhoods and the rebuilding of old Housing Trust areas, shape patterns of health and social inclusion within communities.

Her field of research will investigate the drawbacks and benefits of mixed income communities, the effects of bulldozing long-established public housing suburbs and whether urban renewal improves the reputation and stigma surrounding social housing.

The findings will be used to help the Federal Government develop urban planning policies that consider the health and social inclusion needs of the nation’s most disadvantaged residents.

“Despite a growing economy some neighbourhoods and areas of Australian cities are marked by segregation and concentrations of extremely poor residents,” Dr Arthurson said.

“These residents typically experience lower life spans, higher disease levels, unemployment and poorer physical and mental health than the wider community,” she said.

“So one of the arguments I’m interested in is whether we should de-concentrate poverty – if you’re poor would your life chances improve if you lived around higher income earners or are you better off living around people like yourself?”

Dr Arthurson said her research would incorporate study trips to compare housing models across the UK, US, Canada and Australia.

The ARC award will also fund two PhD scholarships, one focusing on urban renewal and the other exploring the effects of climate change, pollution and natural disasters on poor communities.

Emily Charrison

Flinders tackles medical ‘black box’

A baffling medical condition whereby those affected ignore everything on one side of their world is the focus of a \$375,000 study headed by Flinders University researcher Tobias Loetscher.



Dr Tobias Loetscher

Dr Loetscher from the School of Psychology is one of two Flinders researchers who in November received the Australian Research Council’s inaugural Discovery Early Researcher Career Award to pursue an area of international significance.

His three-year study, starting in 2012, aims to develop effective treatments for spatial neglect – an attentional disorder in which damage to either hemisphere of the brain leaves its sufferers unable to perceive, process or interact with one side of their environment.

These patients behave as if one half of the world has ceased to exist and ignore all objects and people on the side opposite the brain lesion, resulting in bizarre behaviours such as only eating food from one side of a plate or shaving only half the body.

While the exact number of people affected is unknown, Dr Loetscher said spatial neglect occurs in roughly 40 per cent of stroke victims with damage to the right side of their brain.



Dr Darryl Jones

Creating a cleaner, greener environment

Flinders University researcher Dr Darryl Jones has just won a \$375,000 grant to find a way to make the production process of electronic devices, fluorescent lights and neon signs more environmentally-friendly.

The Research Associate based in the School of Chemical and Physical Sciences is one of two Flinders academics who received the Australian Research Council's inaugural Discovery Early Career Researcher Award, announced on 14 November.

Beginning in 2012, the three-year grant will enable Dr Jones to study the physical and chemical interactions found in plasmas – a highly reactive state of matter – which are used to make electronic devices, modify surfaces and create artificial light.

"At the moment a lot of plasma processing chemicals are greenhouse gases that exist in the atmosphere for thousands of years where they can absorb radiation and contribute to global warming," Dr Jones said.

"So we're evaluating if novel gases can form plasmas that will meet the technical requirements of emerging industries without the long-term environmental impacts," he said.

Dr Jones said the focus of his research would be to study the interactions that occur between particles commonly found in industrial plasmas, namely electrons and free radicals, to find out "what interactions control the properties we observe in plasmas".

"Plasmas contain a lot of internal energy so we want to know what particles contain more energy and which have less, and how they transfer their energy," Dr Jones said.

"Plasma processing has traditionally been performed with an incomplete understanding of the processes involved," he said.

"By improving this understanding we can refine our methods and develop more energy efficient and cleaner technologies."

With plasma processing "a multibillion dollar industry", Dr Jones said his study aimed to not only benefit the environment but reduce costs associated with manufacturing new technologies.

"Creating and sustaining plasmas requires significant energy, and given the large scale of the plasma-based industries any improvement in plasma energy efficiency is going to make a huge difference to a company's energy usage," he said.

"Currently we're the only people in the world who are studying the electron interactions with highly-reactive radicals so this area of research is quite unique in a worldwide context."

Emily Charrison

"Currently there are no proven effective treatments for this condition – some therapies work for some patients but not for all and that's because there are different subtypes of neglect," the Postdoctoral Research Fellow said.

"For instance there's motor neglect which prevents people from using one side of their body, or perceptual neglect in which patients cannot pay attention to anything on their damaged side," he said.

"So you can't look at it as a homogenous condition because the treatments that are available, including non-invasive brain stimulation and cognitive rehabilitation, might only work depending on what subtype your neglect falls into."

Using mainly behavioural-based studies, Dr Loetscher will evaluate a person's ability to perform visual-motor tasks such as bisecting a line, copying simple drawings and identifying letters in a group with the aim of developing tests to "disentangle the different subtypes of neglect".

In order to achieve his long-term goal of finding effective therapies for spatial neglect, Dr Loetscher said the first and

most important step is to understand the inner-workings of the brain, namely how the brain selects information, how space is represented and how it processes locations and objects.

This part of the research will involve brain studies of healthy subjects in the Brain and Cognition Laboratory at Flinders, working with Professor Mike Nicholls.

The results, he said, could also be used to tackle other similar conditions such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and Parkinson's disease.

"Before we can even consider treatments we need to understand how the neural mechanisms controlling spatial attention operate in a healthy brain, and how these mechanisms are altered after brain damage," he said.

"Currently this area is a black box, we have treatments but they aren't that effective so that's why it's important to understand how the brain works – and what can go wrong."

Emily Charrison

Campus living a lesson in giving



Flinders Living Lantern Festival

Students are not known for being flush with cash and so it may not come as much of a surprise to learn that residents of University Hall and Deirdre Jordan Village, the University's on-campus accommodation, chose to give what they could – blood or plasma – as part of a recent Flinders Living charity drive.

Their efforts, a total of 65 donations, won them the Australian Red Cross Blood Service's Residential College Challenge, for the second year running.

But, as it turns out, the "Hallies" and "Villagers" also tip in whatever cash they can spare and give in myriad other ways – packing birthing kits, taking part in Shave for a Cause, running a World's Biggest Morning Tea – at the 26 or more charity events held in-house over the year.

This year, the staff and residents raised \$7000 to enable Hall/Village resident Liam Buckley to attend the International Bowls for the Disabled World Championships in Pretoria, South Africa.



Patrick Witcombe and Kimberly Mackenzie

It is an indication of the ethos of giving and community-mindedness that seems to suffuse the place.

Dean of Flinders Living, Helen Fletcher, has a very matter-of-fact attitude to the good deeds of residents and staff.

"We do a ton of fundraising. It's one of the big themes here: that we are all very privileged and we have an absolute obligation to give back to the community," Ms Fletcher said.

"Part of my philosophy is that every resident should walk out of

here feeling that they are a global citizen and that they have an obligation to act as one in the most positive sense," she said.

The high take-up rate to volunteer and to donate, she says, comes down to relationships between the residents, staff, tutors and coordinators.

But it also extends, for example, to Flinders Living's relationship with Scolarest, the Hall's caterer, which won the 2012 national Restaurant and Catering Award in the Industrial/Institutional Caterer category – the first time ever that a university hall of residence or a university college – has won such an award, Ms Fletcher said.

"Everything we do is about relationships and respect and valuing and celebrating," she said.

"That is why Scolarest are obliged to give me funds every year as a sponsor, to support people who are travelling to do volunteer work!"

Talk to current and former residents and it is clear that Helen Fletcher is both a persuasive and inspirational role model.

Kimberly Mackenzie, who comes to Flinders from India via Dubai, has lived in University Hall and now shares a five-bedroom unit in the Village with students from Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands and India.

She is completing a PhD in neuroscience and, as a Residential Coordinator, provides pastoral care and practical support for 42 fellow residents. The blood charity drive was her idea but she credits the continuous altruistic spirit of the residents for its success.

"Helen spearheads that kind of community development and inspires the residents to take up ideas," Ms Mackenzie said.

"She has a great compassion for such issues," she said.

Patrick Witcombe, from Mildura in Victoria, is about to enter the fifth year of a combined law/international studies degree.

He lived in University Hall for three years, including stints as Residential and Senior Residential Tutor. A visit by Geraldine Cox, operator of the Sunrise Villages for children in Cambodia, to the Hall was his impetus to volunteer there.

"On my trip to Cambodia in 2009, Scolarest donated \$500 towards musical instruments for the children. Those kids recently got invited to perform at a music festival in Vienna," Mr Witcombe said.

"We have this nice partnership with Cambodia now. Two of Geraldine's children are now students here and we hope to set up a program where we can take future leaders from the Hall and Village to give them a life-changing experience," he said.

His years in the Hall, he said, have left their mark.

"It's just a wonderful place. Having moved out, I miss it. It's nice to see life on the other side but I only enjoy life on the other side because of this experience. And because I had three wonderful years here, building friendships, discovering who I was as a person and working out what I was passionate about," he said.

The sentiments are echoed by Kimberly Mackenzie.

"It kind of moulds you as an individual. You're not sure what you want to be or even who you want to be when you move away from home. But this place gives you a lot of opportunities to discover who you are and what you're passionate about," she said.

Vincent Ciccarello

Heading in new directions

Nick Pontt graduated from Flinders BA/LLB in 2001 and then worked at Adelaide firm Norman Waterhouse within the Dispute Resolution Team on commercial disputes in the finance/insolvency and commercial technology sectors.

He had a plan to travel the world, taking his career with him. Whilst studying he had managed a local pub and took from that experience a rough ambition to work within business at some future stage. In 2004 he left for London.

Hoping to transition to business within five years of graduation he found in London it was really tough. Refusing to take no for an answer he got a private practice, fee-earning role within a few months. Mr Pontt's advice to anyone wanting to come straight from Adelaide is if they just want a few months' work and some experience, fine, but if you genuinely wish to have an international career, it is amazing how much quicker doors open if you have eastern states experience on the CV.

Mr Pontt has worked on the high-profile High Court Formula 1 dispute, and at Herbert Smith, one of the world's largest litigation firms, on the BSKyB v EDS litigation. More recently, he has been at Manches, as a Senior Associate specialising in City and cross-border commercial litigation and arbitration, again in the fields of technology, intellectual property, pharmaceuticals and financial services.

His experience included working as lead Senior Associate in an international team in a successful complex international arbitration under the auspices of the Netherlands Arbitration Institute against a major global pharmaceutical company for breach of a licence agreement relating to the development of a drug (with the amount in dispute in the order of US\$2 billion).

"From a personal perspective, living in a fast-paced, forward-thinking, at times equal parts glamorous, nostalgic, infuriating, depressing and inspirational City and society which is the gateway to Europe – which I see as (currently) the 'world's cultural hub in terms of fashion, art, literature and politics – has also been such a fulfilling experience," Mr Pontt told *Encounter*.

"I feel that I have learned so much and that taking the first baby steps to pursue a law degree was the start of this good fortune," he said.

At 33, Mr Pontt decided not to leverage his experience and push for a partnership at Manches, but rather to take a shot at what he had always dreamed of, studying at "Oxbridge". Mr Pontt sees a "limitless potential of personal and professional connections offered by a good MBA".

"There are other ways, but for me, the lure of study at Oxford or Cambridge promises serious academic rigour, exchange of international views, and learning from and contributing to a



Nick Pontt

diverse student body of myriad backgrounds and ambitions, and a connection to a network in Europe which would be otherwise unavailable," Mr Pontt said.

Doing all the necessary admissions things, he was offered a place at both but chose Oxford, swayed by the Said Business School's newly appointed, ex Harvard Dean, the school's profile in banking, finance, sector-driven business and private equity, and a scholarship.

"Some people see my step as an unnecessary risk, or potentially a waste of the work I've put in as a lawyer, but I think there can only be gain in continued learning, and the MBA is a logical continuation of and addition to my development as a business professional"

Following the path he has chosen Mr Pontt sees an opportunity to be realised based on skill, ambition and planning. Whilst there are risks, these are outweighed by the challenge and the opportunity.

"The European economy and, in particular London, have struggled in recent years, and the competitive advantage of living here and earning the local currency have turned almost full circle in Australia's favour. If you are adventurous and seeking to carve out a professional and personal experience in such a stimulating, cosmopolitan city as London, there simply is nothing negative about coming over to work and live."

"I'm not alone in looking elsewhere than the law, but in looking elsewhere, the law and the experience of practising it, is a superb platform for many other walks of life."

Geoff Sauer



Digging deep for sustainable mining solution

The potential to damage the environment and expose miners to harmful chemicals is a common feature of mineral processing in Australia and overseas. But UniSA Senior Research Fellow Dr Sarah Harmer is crossing campuses next year in a bid to explore chemical-free alternatives.

Soon to be based in Flinders University's School of Chemical and Physical Sciences, Dr Harmer (pictured) will spend the next four years studying a group of environmentally-friendly microbes, including bacteria, in a bid to replace harmful chemicals used to separate minerals.

Her research comes as a result of a \$648,348 funding boost from the Australian Research Council's prestigious Future Fellowship program – one of three grants awarded to Flinders in November.

In current mining practices, Dr Harmer said ore containing valuable minerals is ground into a fine powder and mixed with water and a cocktail of chemicals in order to separate the valuable minerals in the ore from the non-valuable phases, in a process called "froth flotation".

"Toxic chemicals play an important role in the mineral processing by selectively changing the physiochemical properties of the minerals surface," Dr Harmer said.

"Collectors adsorb onto the valuable minerals surface making it hydrophobic allowing it to attach to a bubble and float to the top of a flotation cell where it is collected," she said.

"The froth is then wiped away, collecting the valuable minerals while the waste rock, or tailings as it is known, is left behind."

While research has already proven the value of microbes to dissolve minerals, Dr Harmer said the challenge now is to understand the surface chemistry that is responsible for microbes selectively attaching to one mineral over another and how they modify the minerals' hydrophobicity.

Dr Harmer said she will use an extremely bright light source known as a synchrotron to image the microbial attachment to mineral surfaces.

Depending on her findings, she said the research could have a positive impact on the minerals processing industry.

Dr Harmer, who is currently based at UniSA's Ian Wark Research Institute, said she was looking forward to working with Flinders staff and students next year.

"It will be great to work with a new group of talented scientists and I'm excited about the opportunity to introduce a new generation of students to advanced spectroscopic techniques which only a synchrotron can provide," she said.

"And together we will work towards a more environmentally-sustainable Australia."

Emily Charrison



Teachers learning life lessons at Mimili

Nuni Adomain and horny dragon

“In eight weeks you probably will experience a funeral and you’ll probably see some pretty bad domestic violence. You’ll also experience some great school camps and some really good learning from the kids. You’ll get a real balance of things.”

Christine Bell, principal of Mimili Anangu School, offers a blunt assessment of the highs and lows of life as a student teacher in the remote Aboriginal community in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in the furthest reaches of northwest South Australia.

But, as a Flinders mature-age graduate leading a teaching staff of seven consisting entirely of Flinders graduates, all of whom arrived at Mimili thanks to a University placement scheme, Ms Bell has no illusions about what it takes to attract and retain staff.

“Generally, people need to be able to live here. I feel that when we get graduates, they are a blank canvas,” Ms Bell, who has been at the school since becoming a teacher in 2004, said.

“Over a six or eight-week placement, you get a chance to look at them and how they cope in some pretty difficult circumstances: living remotely without family, having to manage on a small amount of food of average quality, dealing with some of the things they see around community life and disadvantage which can be pretty horrific at times,” she said.

“It’s not for everyone.”

Mimili Anangu School is one of 11 similar schools dotted across outback South Australia. A recent school trip to Alice Springs took seven hours on the school bus. The nearest doctor is a five-hour flight away. Ms Bell does a 70km round trip each morning and back again each afternoon to ensure the dozen or so students who live on the Homelands can get to school.

English is taught as a second language to the vast majority of the 68 students, whose first language is Pitjantjatjara or Yankunytjatjara, enrolled from reception to year 12. The school also houses a playgroup and pre-school for children under five.

There’s no mobile phone coverage but the facilities, including a sparkling swimming pool, are good.

“The digital education revolution and the Building Education Revolution have been fabulous for us,” Ms Bell said.

“Our schools were pretty run down. They looked terrible and they were treated terribly. You couldn’t get teachers to come here. But since we’ve had more money for infrastructure, our ICT is pretty good, we’ve made our school look nice. It’s in the heart of the community and everyone uses our school.

“It’s allowed us to have some pretty amazing stuff for our kids and to attract really good calibre teachers. We’ve got some amazing young teachers and they’re all from Flinders.”

Two of the teachers, Louka Parry and Jessica Dubois, are regularly asked to present at conferences around Australia and in New Zealand, on literacy and ICT.

Ms Bell has much of which to be proud. The school offers its students an impressive range of activities, such as the 2009 voyage on the One & All. Four students have received

scholarships to attend Mercedes, Rostrevor or Westminster Colleges. It is likely that in 2012 the school will have, for the first time, its very own SACE (South Australian Certificate of Education) graduates. And the swimming program is producing some very capable swimmers.

“One of our girls last year won the Whyalla Swim Thru, a 2km ocean swim. She’d never been in the ocean before, didn’t know what seaweed was,” she said.

Despite the amenities, however, attendance is the school’s biggest issue.

“A lot of our young fellas, at 14, were taken for ‘business’ – initiation – this year. They were gone for a whole term. Not all of them have come back, now they’re classed as Wati or men. There’s not much we can do about that,” she said.

“They value culture and family before absolutely anything else in the world and sometimes I think we could take a leaf out of their book.

“But we can do something about the kids who are out and about in the community but not at school.”

Secondary teacher Nick Brown, who has been at Mimili since 2009, said there are many aspects of living in the community of 300 people that you take in your stride.

“Everyone knows everyone and when you first get here, especially as one of only 14 white people, you stick out like a sore thumb,” Mr Brown said.

“I’m no longer surprised to be met by some pigs or a camel or horse in the front yard or to see, as I did on yard duty the other day, a little pre-schooler holding a stick with a dead snake hanging off the end of it,” he said.

There are some things, though, which continue to take you by surprise: to find children wearing two left shoes of completely different sizes, picked out of the communal shoe box for a field trip to Adelaide; or to have to recover a young boy, who’d gone in search of some bush tucker, from the wombat enclosure at the Adelaide Zoo.

“His eyes lit up when he saw it; he thought it was like shooting fish in a barrel,” Mr Brown said. “He had visions of going back to Mimili a hero saying, ‘I got myself a wombat’.”

Leisure time, he said, is taken up with exercising, camping, playing games or watching satellite TV.

“We don’t want for much up here.”

Mr Brown encourages prospective teachers thinking about working in remote communities to “absolutely go for it”.

“This area is in the mainstream media for all the wrong reasons. You don’t get too many positives stories, which is a real shame, because there are plenty of positive stories to be had,” he said.

“For a teacher, it’s the same positives you get at any school: watching the kids develop and grow and mature and take on board values that you try to impart. And just watching them go about their daily lives with new skills.”

Vincent Ciccarello

What inspires you?

This *Encounter* has taken on a new look and feel with fabulous stories about our alumni and a focus in line with our strategic directions. So what sorts of things take your fancy in terms of what the University has achieved and where it is heading? Let us know what stirs your heart and soul.

The University always faces challenges in times of uncertainty – post-GFC and Eurozone financial worries, the impact on international students and so on. We strive to maintain our high quality of research and teaching despite these external influences. So what's on our horizon?

- A new vision for Tonsley and expansion of the Bedford Park campus to the old Mitsubishi site.
- Expanding and strengthening our presence in the Northern Territory to increase the number of students studying medicine and making a difference to Indigenous health outcomes.
- Establishing new collaborations with TAFE for a seamless pathway from TAFE to university.

- Yunggoorendi celebrated its 21st anniversary this year, marking many achievements in assisting Indigenous students, and the Poche Centres for Indigenous Health and Well Being are gaining momentum, both underscore our commitment to indigenous education and research activities.
- Partnerships with our low socio economic students in the south are being strengthened to improve aspirations for students to come to Flinders.
- New degrees have been offered in a number of strategic areas and with them strategic professorships have been appointed.
- Student engagement and the student experience are being reviewed and enhanced.
- A Dean of Graduate Research was appointed to ensure our higher degree students are well supported and mentored and our research focus has sharpened.
- Our presence in overseas locations has been strengthened with alumni events in China, Malaysia, Indonesia



Diané Ranck; Director, MACO

and Japan and we will continue to build these relationships.

- We are developing a sustainability strategy to create a clean, green and sustainable University.

There is a lot happening on campus and beyond to ignite the passion of students and alumni alike. We challenge you to think about naming rights to a chair or professorship, helping with infrastructure and equipment or with scholarships for specific purposes. Come and talk to us, we look forward to meeting you.

MACO makes moves in the community

Flinders University took on a bold new look in 2011 as our promotion and advertising became steeped in glorious gold – on the sides of trams, on bus shelters, on brochures and in all of our marketing and merchandising material. The new look was perfectly timed, coming as the University – through our Marketing and Communications Office (MACO) – became even more engaged in the community. We embarked on a series of partnerships across a diverse cross-section of society within seven targeted areas – arts-culture, business, education, government, media, science and sport

– all integrated with Flinders Faculties and Schools and other units such as Admissions and the Southern Knowledge Transfer Partnership (SKTP).

A key goal is to integrate Flinders expertise into community activities in these areas by drawing on the University's research and teaching capabilities.

In conjunction with SKTP, MACO's involvement with the Fleurieu Art Prize in the past year is a case in point. Senior lecturer in the School of the Environment, Dr David Bass, worked with eight artists providing insights into environmental

issues like land use changes and urban encroachment on the Fleurieu Peninsula. This knowledge was then reflected in the work of the artists for November's Landscape Art and Environment Exhibition. Fleurieu Art Prize General Manager, Ms Karen Paris, described the initiative as "Flinders providing an intellectual framework for the Prize".

These different aspects of our engagement with the Fleurieu Art Prize demonstrate that our 40 partnerships with the community are substantial 'win-win' collaborations.

A DAY IN THE OFFICE

The MACO team members are highly creative and even more so when they are given free rein to splash some paint around. Everyone in the office contributed to *A Day in the Office* (below) which, if reviewed in the style of the national magazines, might be described along the lines of: 'A work reflecting the individualism of MACO staff brought together into an integrated and innovative whole'. Jackson Pollock, move aside.



Tales of an infant university

Rick Hosking, recently retired from teaching English at Flinders, recalls his days as a student in the first intake of the School of Humanities in the mid-1960s.

They were the earliest days of the School of Humanities, or the School of Language and Literature as it was first known. Lectures on medieval autobiography with concrete mixers running outside the windows, with as many builders labourers about the place as students. Little or no landscaping, the walnuts in the humanities quadrangle just planted, the lake coming and going as they struggled to stop the leaking.

Three hundred and eighty students and 90 staff in 1966. A strong sense of being together in something new and different. Most of the staff were young: the inspiring Felicity Hughes in her early 20s, the legendary Syd Harrex in his 30s. Lunchtimes, years before the Tavern and the Staff Club, we would take our sandwiches to hear George Rudé lecturing. There were weekend soirees at the avuncular Professor Ralph Elliott's house in Coromandel Valley. I drank sherry for the first time.

Small classes, tutorials with only two or three students, with lecturers ready and willing to cancel classes if the books had not been read. Our Spanish professor, Ken Garrad, was a brilliant lecturer; he is often remembered these days for the day his Kingswood ended up in the lake. Remarkably enthusiastic about the piscatorial arts, he announced in the first week of classes that he intended to organise a field trip to enable us to chat away in Spanish. He suggested Gleeson's Landing on Yorke Peninsula. Three of us went along, and after a day or two with the mullet running in the channel and salmon on down the beach, I asked him when we might risk a little Spanish. He told me to go and dig a few more beach worms, but I did learn that tent peg in Spanish was 'clavel de campaña'.

Four years later, at the end of honours, I had to front up for a 30-minute oral examination in Spanish. As I walked into Ken's room and sat down before the two professors in their Cambridge gowns, he described me as a keen fisherman, and suggested we might spend the half hour discussing fishing and camping in South Australia. I managed to get 'tent peg' in.

Later that year Ken took four of us away for a week's camping at Streaky Bay, where we slept under a beach shelter and for the first time he cooked a paella for us, with squid, fish and rabbit we had caught or shot, and shellfish from the reef. He told us stories about his research trips to southern Spain in the late 1940s, walking into the Alpujarras mountains to learn more of the Moriscos, then travelling on to stay in a village on the coast where every evening the fishermen would cook paella on the beach. He would add thyme, sage and oregano to his paella, as they did in Andalucía.

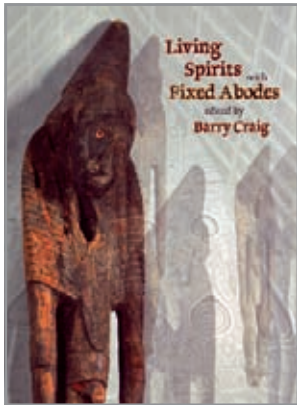
In 1966, with only 400 or so students, Flinders managed to field two football teams in the amateur league, and while those of us in the A7s struggled to win many games, there were some memorable moments.



Most games there were a handful of university staff present to see how we were going. One Saturday in the Adelaide Parklands one of the goal umpires was Barry Boettger, a lecturer in the biological sciences; he would go on to national fame as an expert witness in the Lindy Chamberlain trial. The game against Postal Institute was marked by a touch of biff as some 35-year-old brute of a postie had a go at one of our 18-year-olds. Barry stormed onto the field to let the postie know someone was watching and to give the umpire a little advice about how to handle the situation. The umpie ordered him off; Barry retired to the goals to resume his job. A few minutes later one of the posties put one through the big sticks, but Barry was unmoved. He folded his arms across a formidable chest, his flags unmoving, held the umpire with a fierce stare and told him that he was unsighted; he had not seen the ball, he claimed. He smiled benignly at the howling posties. Flinders people stick together.

Rick Hosking

In Print



LIVING SPIRITS WITH FIXED ABODES

Constituting a major work of scholarship, *Living Spirits with Fixed Abodes* is also one of the most spectacular assemblages of Papua-New Guinean art ever published.

The book, edited by Dr Barry Craig, meticulously documents more than 200 works in the permanent Masterpieces collection of the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, an exhibition he put together during his three years as Director from 1980 to 1983.

Dr Craig, who holds a PhD in Visual Arts from Flinders, is currently Curator of the Ethnographic Collection at the South Australian Museum.

The book follows the exhibition's own categories of watercraft, architecture, household items, gardening and fertility figures, hunting and warfare, musical instruments, masks and funerary items. Dr Craig's essays, with others by Mark Busse, place the items in their geographical and cultural contexts, outlining their ceremonial and mythical significance.

A review in the Oceanic Art Society's newsletter by David Said called the book long-awaited, and described it as "substantial, thorough and authoritative, and a reference that no-one with a serious interest in the art of New Guinea should be without."

Living Spirits is published by Crawford House Publications.



FEELING REAL

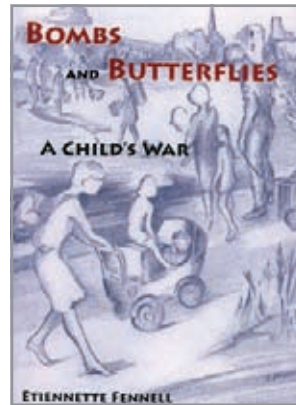
For Flinders lecturer in education Leigh Burrows, one of the most complex and intractable cases of child behaviour management in her professional life has since become a source of inspiration, a PhD thesis and, most recently, a book.

In *Feeling Real*, Dr Burrows describes the course of her involvement in the case of a boy with autism whose violent behavioural problems had traumatised his teachers and fellow pupils, leading to a ban from school and pushing his parents into depression. Compounding the difficulties was the regional location, and the consequent lack of access to expertise and resources.

Dr Burrows' strategy was to involve the artistically gifted boy and his mother in creating an illustrated book, which was eventually published and launched in the town.

"From that point on, a different image of the child began to emerge. While it was difficult, over time he became more trusting of authority figures again and his mother also began to regain her confidence as a parent as we worked to get this child reconnected with school," she said.

Feeling Real is published by Post Pressed.



BOMBS AND BUTTERFLIES: A CHILD'S WAR

Chasing butterflies in a minefield is not a recommended activity for children.

For Etienne Fennell, the inadvertently hazardous hunt was part of a childhood lived in German-occupied France during the Second World War, and features among the incidents of her memoir *Bombs and Butterflies: a Child's War*.

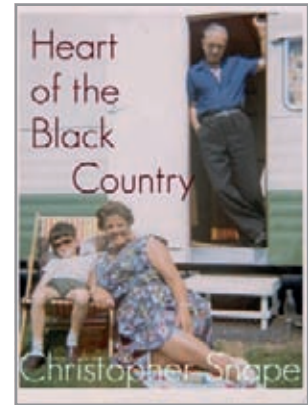
Etienne, a lecturer in French at Flinders, left Paris as a refugee with her family in 1940, spending the rest of the war living in small towns in provincial southern France.

Not knowing anything else, Etienne and her friends took the German occupation and the war-time privations in their stride.

"It all seemed very normal to us," she said.

But there were vivid moments of terror, too, which included an afternoon tea interrupted by a near miss from a bomb that failed to explode, and being a horrified witness to the sinking of a German ship just off the beach by Allied aircraft in 1944.

Bombs and Butterflies is illustrated by Judith Brooks and is available from Flinders Unibooks.



THE HEART OF THE BLACK COUNTRY

Flinders BA honours graduate Chris Snape's new book is a novel, but with its focus on a childhood disrupted by migration, has some strongly autobiographical elements.

The Heart of the Black Country centres around the lives of the Maskell family in the English midlands in the early 1970s.

Grandpa and Grandma Maskell rule benevolently over their three sons and their families. Ten-year-old Keith watches as the family grows – Eric's wife is expecting their first child, Stephen has recently brought a girl home who to Keith is the epitome of beauty and perfection. For Keith the sweet aroma of an almost perfect childhood promises to last forever. But when his father, John, announces he wants to migrate to Australia, the calm façade of the family begins to crumble. Change is in the wind; things will never be the same again.

Keith's narration bears witness to the insecurity and loss of love, and the attempts people make to construct meaningful identities in a world that is becoming increasingly depersonalised.

Julia Beaven of Wakefield Press described the book as "sweet and funny and engaging."

The Heart of the Black Country is available through Amazon as a Kindle eBook.

Charles Gent

Success defines Flinders

Professor Michael Barber, watched by his CDU counterpart Professor Barney Glover, is congratulated by the Prime Minister Julia Gillard

The success of our students and staff define the success of Flinders University and the past year has witnessed substantial achievements on both fronts. This recognition by our peers and professional bodies has taken place against a backdrop of continued investment in staff and facilities which positions Flinders for further growth in a challenging period ahead.

For much deserved recognition of their contribution to Flinders and their respective fields of academic endeavour, I congratulate all of the staff who have been recognised with awards and acclaim this year – and the brevity of this column unfortunately precludes acknowledging each individually. Here are some.

Researcher and biomedical engineer, Professor Karen Reynolds, was recently elected as Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, an honour that recognises a career that has significantly advanced scientific knowledge. Professor Reynolds is Director of the Medical Devices Partnering Program which was recently named Best Research & Development Collaboration in the prestigious annual Business-Higher Education Round Table Awards.

Professor Marika Tiggemann's high level of scholarly distinction and distinguished contribution to psychology was recognised with her election as a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences.

Many of our students also excelled with Ms Elysia Low Pei Chin, a Malaysian student in her final year of Nutrition and Dietetics at Flinders University, receiving the inaugural SA Governor's International Student Award for her outstanding academic record and community work, which includes helping to develop the relationship between Australia and Malaysia. Ms Low had earlier received a Merdeka Award from the Australia-Malaysia Business Council of South Australia in recognition of being the top final-year Malaysian student studying at Flinders.

Playwright Phillip Kavanagh also enjoyed considerable success winning the *Colin Thiele Creative Writing Scholarship* for his play-in-progress *Little Borders*, and another work, *Plain Jane*, which had earlier earned Phillip recognition as a joint winner of the State Theatre Company's Young Playwright of the Year.

* * *

On the broader Flinders front, I am very pleased with the steps we have taken to sharpen the University's research profile with the appointment of a number of distinguished academics to key professorial positions.

Professor Mike Nicholls has been appointed Director of the Brain and Cognition Laboratory in the School of Psychology. Professor Jason McCarley has also recently joined the same School from the University of Illinois with a special research interest in perception, attention and cognition.

Professor Ross McKinnon has been appointed the new Research Director at the Flinders Centre for Cancer Prevention and Control. Professor Pamela Sykes has joined Professor McKinnon in the Centre, exploring the possibility that low doses of radiation may prevent or delay the progression of cancer.

Flinders focus on enhancing the study of mathematics has been strengthened with the appointment of Professor Jerzy Filar who has an international reputation for his work on models that are inspired by the environmental impacts of development.

* * *

The continued expansion of Flinders teaching activities beyond our Bedford Park campus was underscored this year with the opening by Prime Minister Julia Gillard of the new Northern Territory Medical Program facilities on Charles Darwin University's campus in Darwin. The NTMP is an important teaching initiative for Flinders and I was delighted to hear the NT Chief Minister, Paul Henderson, sharing that view with his comments to the NT Parliament in December.

Reflecting on the past year, Mr Henderson said: "Perhaps the most important achievement of 2011 and one that I am extraordinarily proud of everybody who has been involved, is the fact we opened the clinical training school at Charles Darwin University. A kid can grow up in Darwin now and graduate as a doctor without leaving the Northern Territory. That is an enormous step forward for our community here in the Northern Territory, and congratulations to (CDU Vice-Chancellor) Barney Glover and everyone at the university and Flinders."

As we look ahead, Flinders is planning for a significant capital works program to create the capacity required to accommodate anticipated growth over the next 20 to 30 years. This includes the development of a presence at Tonsley Park, demonstrating the University's commitment to the State Government's vision for the site. Flinders infrastructure development also aligns with the State Government's vision to build capacity and grow the economic base of the southern Adelaide region.

* * *

As the world grapples with ongoing economic uncertainty and universities enter a reformed higher education sector, I believe the commitment and expertise of our staff and the enhanced facilities we now enjoy leave Flinders well-placed to meet the challenges ahead with confidence.



Professor Michael Barber
Vice-Chancellor



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