Determined to serve: pioneering women doctors in the ‘Great War’

Vera Scantlebury (later Scantlebury-Brown) and Rachel Champion (later Shaw) were two of the very first women graduates of the University of Melbourne Medical School. Despite the barriers to women doctors caring for male patients, they were among those who cared for the injured during the First World War at London’s Endell Street Military Hospital, pictured. Story page 5.
The University of Melbourne joins the rest of Australia in marking the contribution of the late Malcolm Fraser to public life. By Gabrielle Murphy.

**Defending Gallipoli**

The University of Melbourne’s long association with the Rt Hon Malcolm Fraser began with his father, John Neville Fraser, who is an alumnus. In 2006, Malcolm Fraser was appointed a Professorial Fellow attached to the Asia Pacific Centre for Military Law, and in 2012 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Law.

In 2004, Mr Fraser nominated the University of Melbourne as recipient of his personal papers, and last year the project to digitise the radio speeches he made almost every week from 1955 to 1983 was completed and made available online.

Since 2004 over 120 metres of records have been transferred,” says Katie Wood, curator of the Malcolm Fraser Collection at the University of Melbourne.

In Ms Wood’s estimation, the collection provides an indispensable resource in understanding Australian society and politics during Mr Fraser’s lengthy political career both within parliament and since.

“Mr Fraser remained active in ensuring that the collection continued to grow, become more accessible and used by researchers,” Ms Wood says.

“Our collection at the University of Melbourne Archives will remain as an important legacy for future generations of students and historians, just as he envisaged.”

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**MUP Publications**

This month’s featured publication from MUP is Harvey Broadbent’s Defending Gallipoli: the Turkish Story.

About Defending Gallipoli

From the bestselling author of Gallipoli: The Fatal Shore comes an original, dramatic and eye-opening account of the infamous Gallipoli campaign, told through ‘enemy eyes’.

Based on exclusive access to Turkish archives, Defending Gallipoli reveals how the Turks reacted and defended Gallipoli. Author and Turkish-language expert Harvey Broadbent spent five years translating everything, from official records to soldiers’ personal diaries and letters, to unearth the Turkish story.

It is chilling and revealing to see this famous battle in Australian history through the ‘enemy’ lens. The book commences with a jihad, which sees the soldiers fighting for country and God together. But it also humanises the Turkish soldiers, naming them, revealing their emotions, and ultimately shows how the Allies totally misunderstood and underestimated them.

Defending Gallipoli fills a huge gap in the history of the Gallipoli campaign.

About the author

Harvey Broadbent is a leading authority on Turkey and its history. He is the author of Gallipoli: The Turkish Defence (2015), Gallipoli: the Fatal Shore (2005). The Boys Who Came Home: Recollections of Gallipoli (1990/2000) and Voices of the First World War (2014). In a 23-year career at the ABC, he produced four documentary films on Gallipoli for ABC Television and several radio features. Since 2005 he has been using his expertise as a Senior Research Fellow and Associate Professor at Macquarie University where he directed the Gallipoli Centenary Research Project, a partnership between the university, the Australian War Memorial and the ABC.

Humphrey had been killed at Gallipoli. Humphrey Osbourne Moule, in 1916, after to the College by Judge Moule, father of Chapel depicting St Theodore of Heraclea, a Engineering in 1910 and who left Trinity in 1905. of the College alumni, Robert Bage, who gradu-ated from the University with a Bachelor of Civil Dr Thomas says. “He had a keen interest in the military, having joined the Australian Engineers shortly before joining Mawson’s expedition. The College magazine remembered him at that point as ‘Bustling Bob,’ of infamous memory, while expedition member Charles Laseron would later write that Bage’s ‘quiet determination, resolu-tion, and foresight carried them through ... always cheerful, ready with a hand to anybody who needed it … he was a born leader of men.’” Dr Thomas says one of Bage’s tasks in Antarctica was the grim job of forming, with five others, a search party for Mawson and a detail from the expedition who had failed to return to their Cape Denison base as expected after a trek to the interior. Grim because while the search party re-mained, the rest of the Cape Denison staff left Antarctica on Aurora, the last ship of the season, before weather closed travel for a year, and a long, dark Antarctic winter. Though members of his team perished on their journey into the Antarctic interior, Mawson arrived back at Cape Denison only two hours after the Aurora’s departure: the group were to spend another year on expedition, and explored more of the geology and geography of the western Antarctic coast.

Having returned to Australia after two years in Antarctica, Bage rejoined his unit at the beginning of September 1914 and sailed to the Mediterranean.

“He was killed within weeks of the landing at Gallipoli having been sent out to mark a new forward position for a frontline trench in broad daylight, under Turkish machine gun positions,” Dr Thomas says.

“His proposal that it was a task better undertaken with the cover of darkness was ignored, and he resigned himself to what was essentially a suicidal mission.” Dr Thomas says many other stories of those students who died during the war are equally poignant and are revered still as part of College tradition.

Despite the untimely end of these young lives and the potential they embodied, Dr Thomas says the fortitude with which the College bore the losses was both “remarkable and typical of the day.”

In an article in The Argus newspaper in July 1918 Alexander Leeper wrote: “No institution in the land can show a better record in the matter of volunteering for the war. As a result, Trinity was reduced to much less than half its normal numbers, and was brought into acute financial difficul-ties. … Personally I feel great pride that the College was reduced to such straits for so honourable a reason. Its record of war service makes the most glorious page in its history. Its financial difficulties will soon pass and be forgotten, but the memory of what Trinity did for the Empire in the Great War will be immortal.”

Robert Bage’s Antarctic papers form part of the Newman College Collections on campus at the University of Melbourne.

IS OUR DEMOCRACY WORKING?

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ANNUAL FORUM FRIDAY 24 APRIL 2015, 9.30am - 12.30pm

Concern is high about whether democracy today actually means ‘government of the people, by the people, for the people’. The results of recent state elections and the turmoil in Canberra suggest this is a timely discussion. This exciting forum is free and open to the public.

Keynote Address by Dr Simon Longstaff AO.

Panel Discussion: Stephanie Ryan MLA, Member for Euroa, Dr Nicholas Green, Professor Sally Young, Jack Nunn and Dr Don Edgar OAM.

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UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, 40 COLLEGE CRESCENT, PARKVILLE VIC
Coming together as one: Indigenous welcome on campus

Each year, University staff and students come together to receive an Indigenous welcome to the academic year and to celebrate and show respect for the culture and values of the traditional custodians of the land on which the Parkville campus is built. By Gabrielle Murphy.

Alexandra Hohoi is a Mapu woman whose family is from Murray Island in the Torres Strait. This year she travelled south from Cairns to live at Trinity College and commence the first year of her Bachelor of Science at the University of Melbourne, majoring in Chemical Systems.

“It’s pretty far from home, and I can’t lie, it feels really cold all the time,” Ms Hohoi says. “But the University is so supportive. Coming here has been the best decision.”

Last month, Ms Hohoi joined other students and staff – Indigenous and non-Indigenous – in the North Court in the centre of the Parkville campus for the University’s annual Wominjeka. Meaning ‘Welcome’ in the Woiwurrung language of the Wurundjeri people, the traditional custodians of the land on which the campus stands, the Wominjeka was performed by Wurundjeri Elder, Aunty Diane Kerr.

Professor Cilento emphasised the importance of reconciliation as a whole-of-University business. “It’s particularly gratifying to know that this year we’re welcoming our largest cohort, not just in terms of overall numbers, but the range of disciplines they are studying.

“For example we have 35 Indigenous students studying in the Faculty of Science, including 12 in the first year of the new Bachelor of Science (Extended) program.”

Professor Davis also used the occasion to launch the University’s second Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), underlining the importance of reconciliation as a whole-of-University business.

“Reconciliation is about social change,” Professor Davis says. “We’ve got to work together to achieve it – faculties, graduate schools, administrative divisions, and staff and students. The more people who get involved, the more radical the change will be.”

Reconciliation Australia’s Melinda Cilento endorsed these sentiments and commended the University of Melbourne for its public commitment to reconciliation through the two iterations of its RAP.

“Melbourne University should be deservedly proud of its preparedness to recognise the long-term commitment needed and to formally endorse this commitment in their RAP,” Ms Cilento says.

Referring recent comments which suggested that living on traditional lands was a lifestyle choice, Ms Cilento emphasised the importance words and actions play.

“Words matter, what you say matters,” she says. “Actions matter, and we need to encourage more organisations like Melbourne University to lead by example. For students like Alexandra Hohoi, the University’s RAP was an important contributor in making her decision to study at Melbourne.

“I came down for an engagement camp in Year 12 through the University’s Murrup Barak Institute,” Ms Hohoi says. “It was really amazing to see all the opportunities they had and to read about the RAP for Indigenous people here.

“There isn’t any barrier you can’t overcome to get here. Because coming here and getting an education is going to be the best thing you ever do.”

Wurundjeri dance troupe Andi Warabak exhorted the crowd to ‘join and unite, come together as one’, at this year’s Wominjeka (Indigenous Welcome) in the centre of the University’s Parkville campus. Photo: Peter Casamento.

$10m from Bloomberg Philanthropies for global health data

A new gift to the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences seeks to make the information that resides in major research institutions like the University of Melbourne available to all who need it in developing nations. By Christina Tait.

The University of Melbourne has received an initial $10 million philanthropic grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies new Data for Health initiative, through the Australian Government’s recently launched innovation Xchange.

Bloomberg Philanthropies has made a $100 million commitment over four years to fund the initiative, involving five partners, with the aim of helping over one billion people in developing countries to live healthier and longer lives, by establishing reliable health data to inform health programs and policy.

Each year millions of people around the world die from preventable causes such as diabetes, chronic lung disease, cancers, heart disease and injuries. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 65 per cent of deaths worldwide (35 million each year) go undocumented.

This lack of data makes it difficult for countries to address public health problems and ensure that important health challenges are not missed or ignored.

The University’s breadth of research capabilities and partnerships with affiliates will help deliver expertise to strengthen key epidemiological datasets critical for public policy.

Alan Lopez, Laureate Professor at the School of Population and Global Health at the University of Melbourne will lead a team of experts in collecting and evaluating birth and death data in developing countries, with the goal of establishing a comprehensive ‘roadmap’ to better monitor global health outcomes. His expertise and networks in this area were established over his research career and during his 20 years at the WHO.

“Once priority health issues and challenges are identified based on the broad and comparative understanding that these data can offer, the most effective policies and programs can be developed,” Professor Lopez says.

“Impartial, reliable and timely evidence is a critical step towards informing policymakers and others involved with improving health systems to deliver better population health outcomes,” he says.

The Data for Health initiative will provide countries with tools to better collect and use health-related data enabling them to shape public health policies, allocate resources and measure the success of programs.

The University of Melbourne will provide the principal technical guidance in establishing the information infrastructures, working in conjunction with the Australian government through the Department of Foreign Affairs, and international program partners: CDC Foundation, Union North America, Johns Hopkins University and the World Health Organization.

“As developed nations aspire to personalised medicine, it is incumbent upon us to transfer the expertise that exists in universities and professional networks to developing nations to support the design of effective healthcare systems,” says Professor Stephen Smith, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine Dentistry and Health Sciences.

“Alan’s networks, research and breadth of experiences with the WHO provide outstanding leadership in this field.

“The fight against deaths from chronic and preventable disease, especially in poorer countries, is one to which Melbourne researchers are passionately committed. The Data for Health initiative is an exciting opportunity to extend our efforts in this field, in partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Australian Government and colleagues around the world,” says University of Melbourne Vice-Chancellor, Glyn Davis.

The University welcomes the opportunity to provide the technical leadership of such a significant initiative to underpin the targeting of limited global resources and save lives.

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https://youtu.be/zO2PcqvvdBY

https://youtu.be/ZQpzv8dY

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

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When the Great War broke out, women doctors who offered to serve were famously told to “go home and sit still”. But a group of remarkable women refused, making their own way to the front and forging a significant yet little-known slice of feminist history. Michelle Moo recounts two of their stories.

I
n 1914 Mary De Garis was the resident surgeon in Tibooburra, one of the most remote outback towns in NSW, close to the edge of the Strezlecki desert, when she heard of a war in Europe and resolved to enlist. She had arrived in the arid farming community three years earlier, via the grazing town of Murtaburra, leaving the comfort of her affluent background to follow the rare opportunities for women doctors.

When Britain declared war on Germany, she had been engaged to Colin Thomson – a local farmer and captain of the cricket team – for 10 days.

As the war broke on a Europe that could not have envisaged the devastation of trench warfare, De Garis immediately understood the demands it would make on her vocation.

The war was a call to patriotic duty, but it was also an extraordinary test of the limits of the profession, and would elicit vast advances in medicine, including in plastic surgery and psychiatry. Innovations in the treatment of wounds, broken bones and disease were all to emerge from the ruins.

But De Garis also considered what the war might mean for women doctors, who in 1914 were still marginalised within the profession and society at large. She wrote in a letter: “...if the war continues, the need for doctors will be so great that women will have a chance of being accepted and given military status for it.”

Roused to serve, the newly engaged couple enlisted and Thomson sailed for Egypt, headed for Gallipoli. De Garis’ enlistment to the war effort: war was men’s business, and men’s psychological in that agitation, central to the movement. But there was also something deeply realised in that phrase tells us much about the attitudes to women doctors, and revealed the deep mistrust of the suffragist movement. But there was also something deeply psychological in that agitation, central to the war effort: war was men’s business, and men’s motivation in risking their lives pivoted around women’s vulnerability, their need for protection. Giving women authority disrupted this relation. It may be one reason why the French military establishment was able to accept the SWH, but not their own women doctors. Like France, other allied forces embraced the SWH, but only 14 mobile hospitals were set up near battlefields in France, Serbia, Greece and Russia, with women recruited from all over the empire.

Mary joined the SWH unit operating in Ostrovo, northern Macedonia, under the Serbian army on the Balkan (Eastern) front, taking over in 1917 as chief medical officer from fellow Australian Dr Agnes Bennett who was struck down with severe malaria. It was a 200-bed hospital, operated by 50 women, surrounded by camps of soldiers from the Serbian, French, Russian, Italian and Greek armies.

It was run as a military hospital, with discipline, curfews and mail censoring. Women did every aspect of the work: as surgeons, nurses, ambulance drivers, mechanics, sanitation workers, cooks and orderlies. It was close to the front and De Garis performed difficult surgery in all weather, battling flies and wasps, typhoid, dysentery and malaria. At Ostrovo between 1916-1919, 1084 operations were performed involving amputations, bomb and bullet wounds, compound fractures, hernias, and the removal of foreign bodies.

Miles Franklin, the celebrated Australian writer, worked as an orderly and cook in Ostrovo and struck up a friendship with De Garis. In an unpublished manuscript of her war memoirs she wrote:

A story of the sangfroid of Dr De Garis was current. Once in the early days of the unit, while a serious operation was proceeding in the little operating tent of the advanced dressing station, the bombs began to rain.

The men assistants promptly disappeared to their funk holes, but Doctor continued her operation, occasionally remarking very politely to the Sister who stayed with her, that she was sorry, she supposed the Sister would like to have a look at what was going on outside, but the patient had to be attended to or he would bleed to death.

The extraordinary strength of character required was perhaps not surprising in a woman who had gone against cultural mores, fought for equal rights, and was in effect a pioneer even before war broke out.

After the war Mary De Garis was awarded the Serbian Order of St Sava III class as well as British medals for her contribution in a place of peril and medical urgency. She was not recognised in Australia. Mary De Garis was not the only Australian women doctor who served in the Great War, others included Dr Rachael Chappison, Dr Hilda Bull Elson, and Dr Vera Scantlebury Brown from the University of Melbourne, University of Sydney graduates Dr Laura Foster, Dr Isabel Ormiston and Dr Elise Daljelli, and Dr Preobe Chappelle from the University of Adelaide.

If the Australian Army – which would wait until 1943 to appoint its first woman doctor – was not kind to women doctors, history has not been much kinder and they have been overlooked.

Records of their work are scant, and researchers have had to piece together histories, relying on archives, letters, family collections and other evidence. But researchers on whose work this article has relied for information – particularly Dr Ruth Lee who has written the Mary De Garis biography Woman War Doctor, the Life of Mary De Garis, and Dr Heather Sheard, an expert on women doctors in WWI – have done extensive work to finally bring these stories to light.

The exhibition Compassion and courage: Doctors and Dentists at War, is showing at the Medical History Museum, University of Melbourne.
Malaysian students can count on better Melbourne access

New scholarships provided by a Faculty of Business and Economics alumni are increasing opportunities for access to Melbourne for Malaysian students. By Chris Weaver.

A new access scholarship is helping Malaysian students overcome financial disadvantage and giving them the opportunity of a world-class education.

Dato’ Douglas Cheng Heng Lee – a Faculty of Business and Economics alumnus – recognised the struggles Malaysian students face in moving to Melbourne, which was recently named the world’s sixth most expensive city by The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Dato’ Cheng paid homage to his parents with the scholarships, naming them the David and Mae Cheng Malaysian Access Scholarships. Two scholarships will be awarded each year to Malaysian students who either suffer economic disadvantage or come from a remote part of the country.

The scholarships cover study costs for the three-year Bachelor of Commerce and are believed to be the first access scholarships provided exclusively to international students.

Dato’ Cheng understood the need to support bright young students, noting the opportunity that a University of Melbourne education provides.

“I really enjoyed my time at the University,” he says.

“There is an equality and fairness in Australia that was partly the reason for us introducing the scholarship.”

The first Cheng Scholarship recipient is Samantha Kok from Kuala Lumpur, who began her first semester at Melbourne in March. Ms Kok originally had to defer her studies for a year, as her family could not afford her tuition fees. An email from the University encouraged her to apply for the scholarship, giving her newfound hope. She says the Cheng Scholarship meant she would not have to enrol at Melbourne via a private university path.

“I planned to pursue my studies through HELP University in Kuala Lumpur if a Melbourne scholarship opportunity had not arisen,” she says.

“That would have meant relying on the credit transfer program to get into Melbourne, which was uncertain.”

Ms Kok’s successful application relied largely on her clearly defined academic ambitions, which would have been remote without a Melbourne education.

“I was very keen to further my studies at the University of Melbourne because it is ranked number one in Australia for its Economics, says the Cheng Scholarships amply demonstrate then interviewed five final candidates.

President Milat and the Finance and Account program, she says.

“There is no doubt that studying here will help me develop the technical, analytical and management skills I need to be work- ready as an accountant.”

As with many students, the experience of studying overseas was a particular attraction.

“An overseas education means I can meet new people and experience Australian culture,” Ms Kok says.

“Everyone has a world class education, but I believe it will be an eye-opening lifetime experience.”

Ms Kok was also motivated to study at Melbourne by the op- portunities it would provide to help her family.

“I hope that my Melbourne degree will help me secure a job in Australia,” she says.

“Hopefully that will allow me to provide for my parents, letting them settle down and enjoy the golden years of their lives.”

Malaysian students demonstrated strong interest in the initial Cheng Scholarship, which required applicants to demonstrate aca- demic merit and financial need. A panel that included University representatives and Dato’ Cheng’s mother, Puan Sri Mae Cheng, then interviewed five final candidates.

Professor Paul Kofman, Dean of the Faculty of Business and Economics, says the Cheng Scholarships amply demonstrate Belie – the Campaign for the University of Melbourne’s wider commitment to creating more scholarships for the best and bright- est students.

“I was delighted that Dato’ Cheng’s wish to assist Malaysian students fit so well with the Faculty’s commitment to supporting deserving international students,” he says.

“It continues the wider campaign of ensuring the most tal- ented students come to Melbourne, regardless of their financial or geographic circumstances.”

Creating scholarships for the best and brightest students is a key priority for Belie – the Campaign for the University of Melbourne, which aims to raise $500 million for the University by the end of 2017.

www.campaign.unimelb.edu.au
fbe.unimelb.edu.au

Harnessing the power of experts

Professor Mark Burgman tells Daryl Holland that relying on expert judgement is a risky but necessary business, requiring the right tools and the right experts.

Society relies on the judgement of experts, and when experts are wrong, bad things can happen.

“Experts are over-prone, over-confident and pay to a host of motiva- tional and contextual biases,” says quantitative ecologist Mark Burgman.

“They can have high status, they can be very experienced, they can appear credible and be spectacularly wrong.”

Professor Burgman, who is the Director of the Centre of Excellence for Biosecurity Risk Analysis (CEBRA), in the School of BioSciences at the University of Melbourne, says history is littered with examples where expert judgement was wrong, from the prediction that cane toads would not damage the Australian environment to the conclusion that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction in 2003.

“Of course, we know the answer now,” he says.

“However, in both cases the experts were wrong, for very different reasons.”

“First, he says, you need to ask the right questions, and second, you can’t ask just one expert.

“If you ask a group of experts in a structured, deliberate fashion, then you’ll get an answer that is closer to the truth and better calibrated than if you ask the best regarded person in the room. And that improvement will be considerable and consistent,” Professor Burgman says.

In fact, research increasingly shows the eminence of an expert is a poor indi- cator of their performance in predicting future outcomes.

“We were involved in an experiment with the US intelligence service over the past five years and there were five groups working on this project indepen- dently,” Professor Burgman says.

“The one thing that was common to all of the groups is that the standard indicators of expert performance – which are experience, publications, memberships, status and other things of that nature – are no guide to a person’s ability to predict or judge an unknown fact. The only thing that provides us with a guide is the person’s prior perfor- mance on similar questions.”

“So if the person’s been really good in the past it’s likely they’ll be pretty good in the future. And we use that as a guide to weigh their judgements.”

The main focus of research at CEBRA is biosecurity risk, and Professor Burgman says it is imperative that pre- dictions in this area are as accurate as possible.

“One case of foot and mouth disease would cost the Australian economy four billion dollars, even if we eliminated that one case instantly,” he says.

“We rather think that if you’re not using these tools in areas that involve public policy, health and safety, security or biosecurity, than really you’re being professionally negligent.”

Professor Burgman and his team are now trying to adapt these techniques to ecology and conservation biology, a field where expert judgement has had a checked past.

“The introduction of cane toads was made on the basis of expert judgement in the 1930s,” Professor Burgman says.

“A very confident scientist said there was no evidence there would be any negative impacts, on the basis of obser- vations they’d made overseas. And of course we now know the introduction of cane toads has been an unmitigated disaster.”

The decision to bring Sumatran rhinos into captivity in the 1980s was made on the basis of expert judgements about the proficiency of the people who were going to capture these animals and the effectiveness of zoos to generate captive breeding programs. It was won- derfully unsuccessful and it did more harm than good.”

Professor Burgman’s group re- cently helped the federal government’s Threatened Species Scientific Committee develop protocols to make better judge- ments about risk to threatened species.

The group will continue to develop these tools as part of the University of Melbourne’s contribution to the National Environmental Science Programme (NESSP) Threatened Species Recovery Hub, and they have applied to the Australian Research Council for funding to extend their work to other areas of ecology and conservation biology.

“We’d like a consortium of phi- losophers and mathematicians and psychologists and ecologists. We could do with 50 people,” Professor Burgman says.

cebra.unimelb.edu.au

A ‘Beary’ friendly hospital

A record number of over 800 student volunteers from the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences at The University of Melbourne, staged the increasingly popular ‘Teddy Bear Hospital’ ‘Kids Big Day Out 2015’ to raise funds for the Royal Children’s Hospital’s Good Friday Appeal.

Cane toads in Australia, a very bad idea.
Brian Brown Recording Studio continues the legacy of a visionary Australian artist

State-of-the-art sound recording facilities are now available to students at the VCA and MCM. By Alix Bromley.

A newly refurbished and upgraded recording studio named in honour of the brilliant Australian jazz musician Brian Brown OAM (1933-2013) who established the jazz and improvisation course at the VCA in 1980, has been launched at the VCA and MCM’s Southbank Campus.

The upgrades, funded by the State Government through Creative Victoria, will allow for a larger live recording space, high-end technology and a range of new teaching, research and community activities.

The Brian Brown Recording Studio was launched by the Minister for Creative Industries, Martin Foley MP.

The development of the original studio, known as the Sound Research Studio, was overseen by Brian Brown in 1980, and the studio was regarded as one of the foremost centres for electro-acoustic composition in Australia.

“Brian was an inspired musician who used the most advanced technology he could find, weaving it into his saxophone and flute playing, painting the vision of 21st century music-making,” says Senior Lecturer in Music at the VCA, Dr Robert Vincs, who studied and played with Brian Brown.

The studio now has a “live” sounding space in addition to a “dead” space; a 36 channel in-line recording console with digital integration; a comprehensive collection of new microphone technologies as well as sought-after vintage microphones; low-latency HD video monitoring to allow musicians in a variety of spaces to record and communicate via video; an audio and video link with adjacent teaching space and an ensemble room to deliver studio classes on a large scale.

There are also plans to set up full synthesiser integration to allow digital input into our analogue synthesiser collection – including the rare Syntgy 100 – meaning new production technologies can be used in conjunction with old.

“The studio was in desperate need of a major upgrade, says Director of the VCA, Professor Su Baker, “so we can now offer all the studio functions required by an emerging musician in the 21st century and continue the legacy of a visionary Australian artist.”

The studio was and continues to be the centre for jazz and improvisation recording at the VCA with constant links to ensemble teaching led by prominent musicians on staff including Alex Petout, Rob Vincs, Geoff Hughes, Ashley Cross and Geoff Kluke.

Grants support vital research in epilepsy, cancer and malaria

Melbourne medical researchers have welcomed new federal government grants to support Australia’s health. By Annie Rahilly.

Melbourne medical researchers have welcomed new federal government grants to support Australia’s health.

Patients suffering from cancer, neurological conditions and infectious diseases will benefit significantly from the most recent round of research funding from the Federal Government’s National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

Melbourne’s Biomedical community has received $39 million in collaborative research grants which will have global reach, improving the lives of patients with epilepsy, cancer and malaria.

The funding round provides support for: Development Grants to foster commercialisation, Postgraduate Research Scholarships for early career researchers, and Program Grants over a period of five years, awarded on the basis of demonstrated excellence.

The University of Melbourne has been directly awarded more than $26 million of the total funds awarded in this year’s NHMRC grants, and maintains its research leadership position.

“Because researchers are embedded in clinical environments the translation of their research into patient treatments is significant,” says Professor Stephen Smith, Dean of Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences.

“Collaborations with our affiliates such as The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research, The Royal Melbourne Hospital, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and the Austin Hospital highlight the power of a Biomedical community that links research to clinical care,” Professor Smith says.

Among those to have been awarded significant grants are:

- Laureate Professor Sam Berkovic AC, who has been awarded $16.1 million to further his groundbreaking, globally recognised research in epilepsy. Professor Berkovic is the Director of the Epilepsy Research Centre at Austin Health and discovered the first known epilepsy gene. He leads a team of researchers from the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health and the University of Adelaide.

- Professor Alan Cowman has been awarded $11 million to lead a collaborative team from the University of Melbourne and the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research, to better understand malaria in the human host.

- Professor David Bowtell has been awarded $7 million to lead a team from the University of Melbourne, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and Prince of Wales Hospital to improve outcomes for women with epithelial ovarian cancer and to influence the care of ovarian cancer patients worldwide.

- Associate Professor Mathias Ernst has been awarded $5.2 million to lead a collaboration of researchers from the University of Melbourne and the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research in developmental therapeutics for the treatment of gastrointestinal cancers.

University of Melbourne Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor James McCluskey says the grants recognise the depth and quality of research at the University of Melbourne that can potentially unlock solutions to significant health problems.

“NHMRC funding will enhance the ability of the University and our collaborators to improve health and wellbeing for all Australians. Through engaged and committed research leaders, the University can continue to generate new knowledge through research with meaningful impact on clinical practice,” he says.

www.research.unimelb.edu.au

www.nhmrc.gov.au
Launch of state-of-the-art facilities at new Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation

Laura Soderlind reports on the newly launched Grimwade Centre for Art Conservation

Cutting-edge analytical equipment to detect the paints and pigments used by artists and to examine drawings underneath paintings are part of the cutting-edge technology toolbox housed in the newly launched labs of the Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne.

Director of the Centre Associate Professor Robyn Sloggett says the new state-of-the-art facilities would benefit students, museums and collections across Australia and the Asia Pacific region.

"In order to train the next generation of art and cultural conservators, we work closely with museums, collector and communities to restore objects and items that are often tucked away in collections," Associate Professor Sloggett says.

"We offer assistance when communities don’t have the resources to protect and conserve damaged items.

"The Centre has a very practical industry focus and strong community connections, including a long-term partnership with the RSL LifeCare ANZAC Village in Narrabeen, and with the Warmun community in Western Australia. The Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation works closely with Indigenous artists from a number of communities across Australia.

"Our relationship with the Warmun community in Western Australia is particularly strong, after we worked with elders to save over 600 significant paintings and objects from the community following the flood in 2011," she says.

The cultural and spiritual significance of an object or artwork, informs the way we undertake conservation. We don’t necessarily aim to make an object look like it did when it first was made, but allow the history and meaning it has to people, evident in its use, to remain present in the object."

A gift of $6.9 million from the Cripps Foundation has enabled the creation of the new Centre. The program has been running since 2003 and has just moved into its new facilities. Founded as an academic centre in 2003, the Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation is Australia’s leading provider of cultural materials conservation education, offering the Master of Cultural Materials Conservation as well as a PhD program.

Watch a video of Grimwade conservators at work at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4q0GKHECSKY&feature=youtu.be

Horticulture students triumphant at flower and garden show

Daryl Holland reports on two prize-winning ‘Achievable Gardens’ created by Urban Horticulture students for the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show (MIFGS).

Each year, the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show features the Nursery and Garden Industry Victoria (NGIV) ‘Avenue of Achievable Gardens’, a series of small, stylish, functional, and – most importantly – achievable gardens created by horticulture students from around Victoria.

This year, University of Melbourne Master of Horticulture student Heather Forward won first prize for her garden, ‘Rousseau’s Jungle’, and recent Associate Degree in Urban Horticulture graduate Benjamin Taylor won third prize for his creation, ‘Grounding’.

Ms Forward says her garden was inspired by the jungle paintings of French post-impressionist painter, Henri Rousseau.

"What I am trying to do with my work is to paint a picture using plants," she says. "Plants, water, reflection, sculpture and abstracted forms are used to evoke lush jungle and exotic tigers."

Mr Taylor sees gardens as a place where we can feel physically and mentally grounded.

"Most of us live quite busy, heady, city lives, and gardens can be a real sanctuary to come home to – to really just sit down and relax," he says.

Mr Taylor says his garden is “a little bit like a native tea garden,” with aromatic and medicinal native plants surrounding a circular fire pit.

"It is an example of how even in limited space – a space the size of our small urban allotments – we can still cultivate a sense of connection with the continent we inhabit.”

The students, along with friends and fellow students had four frantic days to install their gardens on site in the Melbourne Exhibition Gardens, shifting three tonnes of rocks, ornate screens, a tiger statue and hundreds of plants into place.

Ms Annette Warner, lecturer in Urban Horticulture in the School of Ecosystem and Forest Sciences, Faculty of Science, says there was some stiff competition in the ‘Avenue of Achievable Gardens’, but Ms Forward and Mr Taylor had done exceptional work, and it had been a joy to see their gardens take shape.

"I am very proud of the way they resolved complex issues when shifting their work from design concept to realisation," she says.

"There is a high level of commitment required on behalf of the students to see a project of this type through to completion."

science.unimelb.edu.au/flower_and_garden_show

Photo: Yves Makhoul

Photo: Emily Bartlett

Photo: Peter McAleese

Photo: Emily Bartlett

Griffith University is now accepting applications for the Master of Science in Climate Change. This program is designed to equip students with the skills and knowledge to address the complex challenges of climate change, preparing them for careers in a variety of sectors, from government and academia to business and non-governmental organizations.

To learn more or apply, visit the Griffith University website.
Kevin Taing’s graduation in 2014, joining his older sisters as Alumni of the University of Melbourne, is a touchstone on a family’s journey that began in the Indochina Refugee Crisis. By Michelle Moo.

Following the establishment of communist governments in the former French colonies of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos in 1975, around three million people undertook perilous journeys, most often by boat, with often young children, seeking safety and refuge. The parents of Jenny, Julie and Kevin Taing — all graduates of the University of Melbourne — were among those who fled.

"As the eldest child in a refugee family, I shouldered a lot of responsibility and experienced first-hand the many challenges, obstacles and disadvantages my parents faced. I remember when I was nine years old, my parents bought a house and as the one with the best English skills in the family — Grade 3 level — I had to read all the paperwork and play interpreter for the transaction."

Education was very highly valued, critical for surviving and flourishing in a new culture. Jenny and her siblings worked hard throughout school.

"All three of us had a public school education and we were all self-starters with a lot of ambition," she says.

"We grew up always believing anything in life is possible and that a tertiary education is empowering and key to changing one's circumstances."

Jenny was the first to enrol in the University of Melbourne, followed by Julie, who accepted a place in the Bachelor of Dental Science from which she graduated in 2008. Kevin, the youngest, followed a few years later to accept a place in the Bachelor of Commerce.

"Jenny is the first in our family to ever receive a tertiary education and it's our inspiration," Ms Taing says. "Both my sisters are my role models. I wouldn't be where I am today without their advice and support. They have taught me to make the most of every opportunity that comes your way."

The sisters’ entrepreneurial spirit was clearly inherited from their parents Seng and Linda Taing, Jenny Taing explains. "From a very young age mum was running the family business, one of Saigon’s largest shoe department stores. With her entrepreneurial skills and determination, she established a successful kitchenware business here in Australia. She is an inspirational woman who broke the mould of traditional roles for women of her time."

While both Jenny and Julie chose to go to the selective MacRobertson Girls’ High School in Year 9, Kevin stayed on at his local high school and on completing Year 12, took up a Melbourne Access Scholarship.

The Access Scholarship is awarded under a variety of circumstances including, in Kevin’s case, to those who gain entry from a non-represented school.

"The Access Scholarship gave me so much support during my studies, including a mentor from the business world as part of the Access Connections Mentoring Program. I received invaluable advice, which helped me transition from university life to the professional world.

Kevin was also awarded a ScholarFit Sports Scholarship for Fencing, and represented the University of Melbourne at the Australian University Games.

He completed his degree in 2014 and has recently commenced a role in finance at Mercedes-Benz Australia Pacific.

"We have all taken different paths. Jenny is a lawyer, Julie is a dentist and I work in finance, but we are all united by the belief that it is a privilege to have a tertiary education and that we all have a duty and responsibility to give back to the community."

Jenny Taing's work, both professionally and in the community, clearly shows this commitment. She is the recent recipient of the Faculty of Arts Alumni Rising Star award for her work in public health, journalism and multicultural policy and has been recognised as one of Australia’s young leaders, appearing on CPA Australia’s list of top 40 Young Business Leaders for 2013. She is currently a senior lawyer at the Australian Securities & Investments Commission, on the board of the Royal Victorian Eye & Ear Hospital, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, the advisory board of the University’s Centre for Advancing Journalism and the Alumni Council, and a former commissioner of the Victorian Multicultural Commission.

It was during her time as a commissioner that she met her friend and mentor, the late former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser.

"Mr Fraser is the reason my parents were able to come to Australia and he has been one of the most important and influential people in my career and life. I am so lucky to have had his friendship and advice and we shared many common values and interests, including the importance of multiculturalism and the humane treatment of refugees."

"There is much said in the public debate about the refugee issue that detracts from meaningful and sensible policy discussion and formulation," Ms Taing reflects. As a starting point, I think it’s so important for people to hear about the positive and valuable contribution refugees and their children make to Australian society and its future. Hopefully this can promote a more informed debate based on mutual respect and understanding."
A mentoring program run for students by the Melbourne Law School gives ambitious mentees the chance to explore the inside workings of the law in practice. By Liz Banks-Anderson.

Mentor program fosters international knowledge exchange

A mentoring program run for students by the Melbourne Law School gives ambitious mentees the chance to explore the inside workings of the law in practice. By Liz Banks-Anderson.

The Melbourne Law Masters is the main bridge towards achieving my goal. I strongly believe that upon completion of my studies I will have an impact in the area of commercial law in respect to mining developments in Mongolia,” Mr Zagdsaikal said.

Associate Dean of the Melbourne Law Masters Program, Caron Beaton-Sims says masters’ students engage in this type of study as a means of exploring and developing their professional cases.

“The mentor program provides our students with the opportunity to get to know and interact with experienced practitioners and others in the profession. This is particularly important for the Law School’s large and growing body of international students who are new to Australia and keen to learn about the legal system, legal practice and career opportunities and pathways here,” she says.

The MLS Mentor (Masters) Program is fostering international networks, linking full-time international students with someone outside the Law School.

Mongolian student Odgargi Zagdsaikal chose to study a Masters of Commercial Law as a way to enhance his knowledge in this area and take it back to Mongolia.

Mr Zagdsaikal, a former lawyer with the Mongolian government, was mentored by Jeremy King, a partner at the Melbourne office of law firm Corrs Chambers Westgarth who had an expertise in banking and finance, and major projects and infrastructure.

“My ambition was to take it back to Mongolia. Having this opportunity to work in private practice, to writing a book and participating in seminars, all the activities I enjoy doing. I view it as something that all senior practitioners should do because of the benefit it flows to the mentee, and vice versa,” he says.

Mr King believes the mentorship program is valuable because it gives students insight into transactional practice in law — from the daily life of working in private practice, to writing according to client demands.

“An advantage the internship gave Odga was seeing what life is like in private practice; which doesn’t really exist in Mongolia — at least not to the same extent as here in Australia. “It helped to break down for Odga perhaps some of his preconceived ideas of what private practice is like … I hope it didn’t shatter his dreams!”

Mr King says at a time when the employment market is highly competitive the advice he gives to students encountering such a challenging job market is to send prospective employers a consistent message, indicating your area of legal interest and the subjects you study and present as a whole package.

“Choose the electives that reflect your interests. And don’t underestimate how important it is to have work experience, other interests and hobbies to make you stand out from the crowd. You have just a few short pieces of paper to really show your personality and how you might work in a team,” he says.

As for what he hopes to do once back in Mongolia, Mr Zagdsaikal is approaching his career goals with a new sense of direction. Recently, he accepted a position of Senior Legal Adviser for the largest and one of the leading whole service commercial banks in Mongolia. “After taking the mentorship program, and thanks to my mentor’s suggestions, I became more thoughtful and confident about my future career. I have a great passion to succeed whatever I choose for my career path.”

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How old are we really?

Andi Horvath explores the biological and environmental factors that contribute to human ageing.

Aging is a normal biological process, and some of our bodies start to age the moment we are born, such as hearing. Other functions, like the reproductive system, continue to mature into our twenties. At around 30 there is a gradual decline in structure, function and tolerance to environmental stresses. The good news is mentally we may be happier in our forties as experience, logic and emotion continue to develop and mature. There are many online calculators that estimate your ‘biological age’ as opposed to your ‘chronological age’, and voice asked neurologist and clinical epidemiologist Associate Professor Cassandra Szoeke to help make sense of these concepts.

Associate Professor Szoeke is director of the Women’s Healthy Ageing Project. She has led research programs on Neurodegenerative Diseases, Mental Disorders and Brain Health at the Australian Commonwealth Science and Industry Organisation (CSIRO) and was the inaugural chair of vascular research in the Australian Imaging Biomarker and Lifestyle (AIBL) study of ageing.

“Chronicological age is simply the number of years you have been alive — essentially the number of candles you put on your cake,” she says. “Biological age compares your physical and mental health with what would be expected on average at your chronological age.”

“Calculators of biological age include biomarkers which are recordable molecular or cellular events that reflect vital organ functions. They commonly include indicators of cardiovascular, pulmonary, and brain functions, as well as inflammatory, genetic, family history, psychological, and lifestyle factors.”

“These biomarkers are associated with disease onset of diseases and consequent loss of function. Therefore they can provide a crude estimate of our health and likely health into the future. As we understand disease and health, various additional biomarkers like DNA tests, medical scans, and understanding environmental factors, including lifestyle factors which have a significant impact on health, should be included in such models,” Professor Szoeke says.

“The effects of cell degradation and ageing are more obvious by our fifties after the reproductive period of our lives. Along with an observable decline in muscle mass, bone density and metabolism, there is an increase in the progression of age-related diseases. Such diseases are often just the period of time with a negative exposure such as the progressive clogging of arteries from lipid dysregulation and high blood pressure, which provide a greater risk of stroke and heart disease. Other conditions like certain cancers, dementia and osteoarthritis are also linked to ageing.”

“What is an inevitable part of ageing and what is a modifiable risk or exposure which causes disease in ageing is an important part of our research into healthy ageing. “In some diseases of older people like dementia we now know that accumulation of amyloid plaques in the brain starts in our thirties,” Associate Professor Szoeke says.

“The good news is you can reverse and retard biological ageing, in most cases you are not entirely beholden to your genes as the environment can play a larger role. The old chestnut of diet and exercise can improve our bodies and our minds. But we need to think about healthy ageing a lot earlier in life. Think of healthy diet and exercise from the start. “It is these women who have contributed valuable data for prevention strategies and future health care,” she says.

www.mdhs.unimelb.edu.au

Liz Banks-Anderson
This year is the 800th anniversary of the Magna carta, which effectively established English Common Law and brought all men, king and commoner alike, to live subject to the laws of the land. Andy Walsh previews a forthcoming lecture on the document and its legacy by leading British legal historian Paul Brand.

Only eight centuries ago King John of England – the same infamous King John of Robin Hood legend – sealed the terms of a peace treaty between himself and a group of rebellious barons at Runnymede, in a document that has become known to history as Magna Carta (Great Charter).

The document established the principle that everybody, including the King, was subject to the law, and thereby established the fundamental and foundational element in English Common Law.

Professor of English Legal History at the University of Oxford Paul Brand, widely regarded as the world’s leading Magna Carta expert, says before Magna Carta the absence of any written constitution for England or Britain gives “peculiar importance to what can be seen as the nearest thing we have to a foundational document for subsequent English constitutional development.”

Professor Brand is this year’s Miegunyah Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the University of Melbourne and will this week deliver the 2015 Miegunyah public lecture for the Melbourne Law School on the document’s first century of existence.

Professor Brand says Magna Carta’s legacy is evident beyond English borders, and Australia’s shared constitutional heritage with Britain has the charter echoed in our own Constitution, with two of the 1215 version’s clauses, in modern form, effectively in law:

39. No free man shall be taken or imprisoned, or dispossessed, or outlawed, or banished, or in any way destroyed, nor will we go upon him, nor send upon him, except by the legal judgement of his peers or by the law of the land.

40. To no one will we sell, to no one will we deny, or delay right or justice.

“Magna Carta has endured for eight centuries because it is the earliest legislation to become part of the written heritage of the Common Law and of common lawyers and, as such, the earliest written statement of various broad principles of the Common Law.

“It has had a long history of accretion of meaning to the original text which has allowed later lawyers and judges to see it as entrenching the right to trial by jury in criminal cases and the right of habeas corpus (which establishes the legitimacy or otherwise of imprisonment), things which were not part of what Magna Carta originally meant but which they found helpful in arguing for constitutional liberty.”

Professor Brand’s lecture, “The First Century of Magna Carta and the Law,” will explore the importance of the iconic document from its initial sealing in 1215 to its subsequent reissues in 1216, 1217, 1225, 1297 and 1300.

Leading up to the document’s anniversary, the historian has been involved in a landmark investigation into its history, including providing online translations and commentaries on the text.

He said it was his discovery at school that learning Latin allowed him direct access to primary materials of English medieval law, including the Magna Carta, which sparked his initial interest in the topic.

He has since built on his passion a career spanning more than four decades.

The most rewarding aspects of my career have been communicating to others through lectures and teaching my enthusiasm for English medieval legal history, the opportunity of editing important primary materials, and writing articles and monographs about aspects of my subjects,” Professor Brand says.

Making his first visit to Australian shores, Professor Brand believes the significance of one of the founding documents of modern law and democracy will continue to hold its appeal for centuries to come.

“Magna Carta has a good track record of acting as a continuing source of inspiration,” he says, “and I certainly hope that it will continue to be thought of in that way.”

Professor Brand will deliver his free public lecture at Melbourne Law School, 185 Pelham Street, Carlton on Wednesday, 15 April from 6.30pm.

Online registrations are essential and can be made at www.law.unimelb.edu.au
There are many paradoxes surrounding future food security. We are told that we need to produce more food yet we currently produce 50 per cent more than we consume. Enormous amounts go to waste at every stage of food production and consumption. We have the capacity to feed the world yet we appear unable to distribute or produce it where it’s needed.

There are also now more people dying of obesity-related disorders than of hunger. Yet the long-term social and economic burdens of obesity and hunger have been looming for a long time.

Another conundrum is that unhealthy foods with less nutritional value also require energy and resources to produce. Edible crops used to produce biofuels today were used for human food. There would be enough food for 12 billion people. Yet we continue to use the limited fertile land for growing biofuel when we have other sustainable clean options for energy.

Australia has been faced with unique challenges in food security with extreme weather, water supply, land quality, transport costs, energy to trade, and resources to produce. Grappling with the economic, political, social, and environmental conundrums of future food security are researchers like the University of Melbourne’s Dr Seona Candy. She is working with the Victorian Eco-Innovation Lab on an ARC-funded project called “Modelling policy interventions to protect Australia’s food security in the face of environmental sustainability challenges.”

“We model scenarios we explore the question: when do we change our food production and consumption to put enough food on the table for the next generation,” Dr Candy explains. “It will inform government policies to ensure future food security. We essentially explore the questions: How will we feed our population in the future? How do we plan for sustainable food production with our limited resources such as water and land as well as infrastructure capability? How do we achieve positive health outcomes for our communities alongside the dynamics of supply and demand in local and global consumer markets?”

Researchers developed a mathematical model of dengue virus transmission and used the experimental results as a basis to predict how well Wolbachia would reduce the intensity of dengue transmission under a variety of scenarios. “We found that Wolbachia could eliminate dengue transmission in locations where the intensity of transmission is low or moderate,” Dr Candy said. “In high transmission settings, Wolbachia would also cause a significant reduction in transmission.”

“Our findings are important because they provide realistic measures of the ability of Wolbachia to block transmission of the dengue virus and provide precise projections of its impact on dengue infections. Wolbachia has been recently introduced into Cairns and Townsville and the results of this study suggest future dengue outbreaks in these cities should be much less severe than in the past. Dengue continues to be a major public health problem in Asia and Latin America. Estimates suggest more than 100 million cases occur globally each year.”

Researchers at the University of Melbourne along with international collaborators are using a naturally occurring bacteria, Wolbachia, to block the dengue virus in Aedes aegypti mosquitoes. Dengue causes flu-like symptoms, including intense headaches and joint pains. Published in Science Translational Medicine, Professor Cameron Simmons, from the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Melbourne and the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity, says the discovery could lead to improved strategies to reduce the incidence of dengue. “We did a ‘real world’ experiment and allowed mosquitoes infected with Wolbachia and uninfected mosquitoes to feed on the blood of volunteers with dengue pathologies. Our team then measured how efficiently Wolbachia blocked dengue virus infection of the mosquito body and salivary glands, which in turn steps stops them spreading the virus between humans,” Professor Simmons says.

When we used in conjunction with a nanopore (a tiny hole), a single DNA molecule would pass through the graphene-based electrical sensor - a technique that would revolutionise medical research and testing. Led by Dr Jin Cenverka and PhD candidate Nikolai Dontschuk from the University of Melbourne, the study also included scientists from the Australian Synchrotron and La Trobe University and is published in Nature Communications.

The Australian researchers have shown that graphene - a one-atom thick sheet of hexagonally arranged carbon, shaped like chicken wire - can detect the four nucleotides that make up DNA (cytosine, guanine, adenine and thymine). A unique combination of the four nucleotides makes up the individual DNA sequence of a gene. Currently, DNA sequencing is a fundamental tool for medical diagnostics, forensic testing and medical and biological research. The use of graphene to electrically sequence DNA promises to improve the speed, throughput, reliability and accuracy while reducing the price compared with conventional sequencing techniques, according to Nikolai Dontschuk.

“We found that each nucleobase influences the electronic structure of graphene in a measurably different way,” he says.

“Recent clinical trials in severe asthma patients using antibodies that block IL4Ra have shown positive results leading to marked improvement of lung function, symptoms and reduced use of oral steroids.”

However, current limitations with antibodies mean they require intravenous infusion or injections under the skin that can be painful. Most asthma medicines work best when delivered directly to the lung, but this has so far proven problematic with antibodies, as they are challenging to formulate for inhalable delivery.

With the promise of inhalable delivery, PRS-060 may provide a targeted approach by binding tightly to IL4Ra as clinically validated antibodies in a defined area to block IL4Ra directly in the lung tissue. According to Anticalins CEO Colin Anderson, Director of the Centre, Yoder says Anticalins show promise in addressing high unmet medical needs and expanding the potential of targeted therapeutics.

“We’re targeting a very specific receptor to work on the protein that will lead to clinical trials for treating asthma.”

The University of Melbourne along with Piers Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (OTC:PRS) has announced a collaboration and funding awarded to advance new asthma treatments under the auspices of Anticalin. The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) has awarded $500,000 to researchers at the Lung Health Research Centre based at the University of Melbourne to research Piers’ novel protein Anticalin®-brand therapeutic, PRS-060, for the treatment of asthma.

Lead Investigator Professor Gary Anderson, Director of the Centre, welcomes the opportunity to work on the protein that will lead to clinical trials for treating asthma. “PRS-060 works by blocking a key protein called IL4Ra. This detects signals in what is called type 2 immunity that both initiates and sustains the symptoms of conditions such as asthma and allergies,” he says.

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“We’re targeting a very specific receptor to work on the protein that will lead to clinical trials for treating asthma.”
Talking about sexual health in a new century

Annie Rahilly introduces a new book that looks at sex and sexual health from an interdisciplinary perspective.

RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

In modern society, sex is everywhere but sexual health is not, according to a new book just published.

In her book Sexual Health: A Multidisciplinary Approach, editor and author Meredith Temple-Smith, Director of Research Training in the Department of General Practice at the University of Melbourne, examines every aspect of sex, including legal issues from the perspectives of health practitioners, and the sexual health of particular populations, like prisoners, refugees, sex workers, populations with disability, and Indigenous populations.

"There are books written about sex and its biology, there is information about people's sexuality and why it varies, there are guides at the University of Melbourne, examines every aspect of sex, including legal issues from the perspectives of health practitioners, and the sexual health of particular populations, like prisoners, refugees, sex workers, populations with disability, and Indigenous populations.

"There are books written about sex and its biology, there is information about people's sexuality and why it varies, there are guides to health practitioners about how to handle sexual problems and variations but there are few resources that bring this together in one book, and examine it from a sexual health perspective," Associate Professor Temple-Smith says.

"Sexual health is now seen as multi-dimensional, a product of complex interplay between biological, psychological, and socio-cultural factors. This book brings together 34 Australian experts across those fields to discuss up-to-date perspectives on sexual health."

Associate Professor Temple-Smith's research career, which has spanned 30 years, has focused largely on sexual and reproductive health.

Contributors to the book have looked at sexual health from every angle - biological, sociological, and clinical practice. The sexuality of specific populations has been explored and their specific needs highlighted.

"Transgenderism is one such issue that has been examined, for as recently as May 2013, it was considered a mental illness. Clinicians have come to understand it is a difference in gender expression and not an illness," she says.

The section on transgenderism, in the chapter on sexual diversity, highlights key sexual health issues in this population. Other specific populations which are the focus of particular chapters include refugees, sex workers, prisoners and people living with an illness or disability.

Based on her previous book, Associate Professor Temple-Smith believes this new approach to understanding sexual health will continue to be adopted as a text by Family Planning organisations and in the training of GPs and nurses.

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Humanity meets technology on social media

Niamh Crenins explores what might be the next big thing in social media, founded by Business and Economics alumnus Daniel Millin.

ALUMNI

Social media has become an edited version of the best bits of our lives – featuring professional achievements, social adventures and an unending stream of well-lit selfies – but we’re increasingly reluctant to share the tough times.

The person struggling to lose weight shares their story only once they fit into their skinny jeans and the person who loses their job changes their status to specialist rather than unemployed. But, what about the journey along the way? The ups and downs that make life worth living.

Real life starts where social media ends and that is exactly where Incogo, a new personal online platform kicks off. Founder and creator Daniel Millin describes his latest venture, launched earlier this year, as ‘the evolution of social media that we have been waiting for’.

Incogo is a community where members share their personal journeys, from overcoming a fear of heights, planning a wedding or battling cancer, privately through invitation only groups, or publicly with anyone interested in their topic.

Rather than liking a post, members support individuals on their journey and share experiences through the good, the bad and the ugly.

"The vision for Incogo is to infuse modern technology with good old fashioned humanity," Mr Millin explains.

A self-proclaimed social media addict, Mr Millin was growing increasingly disconnected on other social platforms due to the sheer amount of noise in his newsfeeds. According to research by McCrindle 78 per cent of Australian social media users share their frustration with superficial social media use and 83 per cent of Australians are craving more meaningful digital connections.

"On Incogo people support each other much like they do in real life. It’s not about replacing these real life interactions but supporting them and fostering meaningful relationships with like-minded people on a global scale. Members are free to choose whether their journey is public to everyone or accessible by invitation only. Incogo is purpose-built for real life with privacy at its core,” Mr Millin explains.

Mr Millin has used the platform to share many of his own journeys including learning to kite-surf, buying an apartment, losing weight and even founding incogo.

"Every time someone supports me I’m encouraged to keep going and that’s the kind of platform I wanted to create. While it’s early days the feedback has been really positive.”

Twenty-eight-year-old Tammy Velden was among the first members of Incogo. She started her journey, Pink is a part of me, after she was diagnosed with breast cancer and inspired others with her positivity and honesty.

"Incogo gave me a safe space to share a very difficult part of my life with people around me who genuinely cared about what I was going through,” Tammy says.

"As I posted about my breast cancer, the encouragement I received on the platform really lifted my spirits. My friends and family also felt connected and up-to-date with my progress but Incogo took the pressure off me to have to update people individually. There’s real magic in Incogo. It caters for the real part of life, the things we are too afraid to share on social media.”

Mr Millin, an alumnus of the Faculty of Business and Economics, is not new to the world of start-ups. He found success early in his career with Mediaverse, a media evaluation firm which he grew from a one man show operating from his couch to a global practice servicing some of the world’s largest firms.

He says his entrepreneurial self-belief, coupled with a tremendous self-delusion that he cannot fail, motivate him to keep going. He is confident that Incogo will spark a new online movement towards more meaningful connections online.

Get Incogo at:

www.incogo.com

Apple App Store and Google Play Store

Founder@incogo.com
April Timetable

Up Close Podcast
http://upclose.unimelb.edu.au
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Vote of no confidence: Electronic voting and its chequered history
Doctors Alex Halderman and Vanessa Teague, security experts in electronic and internet voting, explain that while e-balloting is full of promise it has yet to solidly deliver the privacy, reliability and vote integrity that voters should demand. Presented by Elisabeth Lopez.

Halderman is an expert on electronic voting security, and is Assistant Professor of Computer Science and Engineering at the University of Michigan. Teague is a research fellow in the Department of Computing and Information Systems at the University of Melbourne.

Online now.

Giftedness: Identifying and handling gifted children in schools and in life
Giftedness and exceptional learning expert Professor John Munro discusses how “giftedness” is assessed in children, how notions of giftedness vary across cultures, adult outcomes for gifted children, and the vexed question of how to handle gifted children at home and in the classroom.

Presented by Lynne Haultain, Professor Munro is Head of Studies in Gifted Education and Exceptional Learning in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne.

Online April 24.

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Student athletes set to make their mark in sport and studies

Rod Warnecke introduces two of this year’s elite athlete students.

First year science student Joel Baden plans on having a big year. Having worked hard on his VCE at Melbourne Grammar School, Mr Baden is relishing the opportunity to immerse himself in University life. While the student experience can be different for each student, Mr Baden’s experience will largely revolve around his aspiration to represent Australia at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games.

First year commerce student Monique Iannella (who studied at Woodville High School in South Australia) is another student who will be engaging in many wonderful opportunities that come the way of students new to the University. Her main focus however, will be to cement her spot in the Australian U20 women’s football (soccer) team, the Young Matildas.

Mr Baden and Ms Iannella are among some 50 first year students who will be supported by the University’s Elite Athlete Program (EAP) in 2015. This support may include flexible study assistance to help manage clashes between studies and training and competition, extensions for assignments where they also coincide with major blocks of sporting activity and alternative exam arrangements, should they also be required.

Elite Athlete Co-ordinator Carl Junot explains that the University’s Elite Athlete and Performer policy is a welcome support mechanism for many new elite athletes beginning their studies at the University.

“The opportunity for elite athletes to be recognised by a University policy that supports their endeavours to successfully study, while also working towards achieving their life-long sporting dream, is a really important reason why many elite athletes aspire to study at the University of Melbourne”, Mr Junot says.

In Joel Baden’s case, his connection to the Melbourne University Athletics Club and his coach Sandro Bisetto (who also is one of Australia’s in-demand junior jumping coaches) was a bonus to being supported through the Elite Athlete Program.

“Sandro has been coaching me for a number of years now and I had been doing a lot of training at the University track. It was a great opportunity to not only develop my high jumping, but to also get a feel for the University environment and the different support that might be available to me,” he said.

“Growing up in Geelong and travelling to Melbourne was a bit of an issue at first, but I couldn’t be happier to be studying my preferred course in science and joining one of Australia’s oldest athletic clubs in MUAC,” he says, “although I’m still very keen to find some housemates who live locally so I don’t have to travel as often.”

For Ms Iannella, sporting opportunities led her to Victoria and as a result there was only ever going to be one place she wanted to study. “Melbourne’s the number one university in the country and when I graduate I know my degree will be well regarded around Australia and overseas. This is really important as when football is finished, I know I’ll have a Melbourne degree behind me as I look to make my way in the professional business world,” she says.

“The Elite Athlete Program is going to help me keep focused on both studies and football. And for elite athletes, any financial support that may be available is absolutely crucial as it’s really hard, almost impossible, to be able to also work part-time while studying and training for the opportunity to represent your country.”

The University has a long and proud tradition of supporting outstanding student-athletes in their sporting and academic pursuits, and these two of the newest recruits are set to make their own mark in their on and off-field endeavours over the coming years. So, watch this space.

A complete list of 2015 Elite Athlete Program scholars is at:
www.sport.unimelb.edu.au/eliteathleteprogram
CONCERTS

- MCM New Music Ensemble: A Birtwistle Portrait
  Saturday 18 April, 2pm
  Conductor: Elliott Gyger
  The MCM New Music Ensemble presents the music of one of the world’s greatest living composers, Sir Harrison Birtwistle. Presented as part of the Melbourne International Trumpet Festival, this collaboration between MCM staff and students showcases the trumpet in conjunction with other brass and percussion.
  Where: Melba Hall, Royal Parade, Parkville
  Admission: Free

- New Music Demystified: Cellist, Friedrich Gauwerky
  Monday 11 May, 6.30pm
  Join visiting German cello virtuoso and one of the world’s leading new music specialists – Friedrich Gauwerky – on stage at Melba Hall as he explains his passion for new music through works by composers including John Cage and Guentaro Scelsi.
  Where: Melba Hall, Royal Parade, Parkville
  Admission: Free

- Jazz & Improvisation Small Ensemble Series at Bennetts Lane
  14 & 21 April, 8pm
  An ensemble based series featuring emerging contemporary improvers performing original compositions and arrangements.
  Where: Bennetts Lane Jazz Club, 25 Bennetts Lane, Melbourne
  Admission at the door: $10 Full / $8 Concession

- Melba Hall Lunchtime Concert Series
  A series of lunch hour concerts hosted in the newly refurbished Melba Hall, held each Monday of the semester from 1.10pm – 2pm
  Monday 13 April
  Neil McLaren baroque flute, playing Bach and Tchaikovsky.
  Monday 20 April
  Melbourne Conservatorium Chamber Brass
  Joel Brennan trumpet, William Day trumpet, Roman Ponomariev french horn, Don Immel trombone and Mike Sabo bass trombone, with special guest Liam Day (Malaysia Philharmonic Orchestra) playing Addyshye, Monteveded and Rodierou.
  Monday 27 April
  The Sound of Silence
  Merlyn Queke soprano, Nicholas Dinopoulos bass-baritone and Andrea Katz piano, presenting songs by Mahler, Schumann, Weill, Bogie, and Simon and Garfunkel.
  Monday 4 May
  Kristian Chong piano, playing Mozart, Hyde and Schubert.
  Monday 11 May
  Igor Machlik and Olga Kharitonova piano duo, playing Mozart, Ravel and Saint-Saens.

PERFORMANCES

- Dystopia
  6 – 8 May, 7.30pm 9 May, 2pm & 7.30pm
  A new full length dance work by choreographer Lina Limosani.
  Where: Gasworks, 21 Graham Street, Albert Park
  Admission: $23 Full / $16 Concession at the door

EXHIBITIONS

- Halfway There
  4 – 28 April
  Opening: 9 April, 6 – 8pm
  Exhibition opened by Anastasia Close
  16 April, 1pm: Artist Discussion
  11 April, 2.30pm: Curator Talk
  Halfway There is a student-curated exhibition, presented by undergraduate students from the Drawing and Printmedia, VCA.
  Where: City of Melbourne Library, 253 Flinders Lane, Melbourne
  Admission: Free

- Ian Potter Museum of Art
  Swanston Street, Parkville
  Gallery hours: Tuesday to Friday 10am-5pm, Saturday and Sunday 12-5pm
  Closed Monday.
  Free admission
  Enquiries: 03 8344 0327
  W: art-museum.unimelb.edu.au

- Nature/Revelation
  to Sunday 5 July 2015
  Climate change and its devastating impact on the earth’s many ecosystems is arguably today’s most critical global issue. Nature/Revelation celebrates the unique capacity of art to cut through prevailing rhetoric to stimulate individuals both intellectually and emotionally in the face of current environmental issues.

- Luminous World: Contemporary Art from the Wesfarmers Collection
  to Sunday 5 July 2015
  The exhibition presents significant contemporary paintings, photographs and objects by leading Australian and New Zealand artists acquired by Wesfarmers over three decades and shared together for the first time with the Australian public.

Margaret Lawrence Gallery
40 Dodds Street, Southbank
Opening hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 12pm – 5pm
Admission: Free
Enquiries: 03 9035 9400 or rel-gallery@unimelb.edu.au

SHORT COURSES

There are a wide range of upcoming short courses at the Victorian College of the Arts and Melbourne Conservatorium of Music. With programs for teens and adults, from novice to experienced, you can fuel the creative fire in your belly. Upcoming short courses include Theatre audition workshops and Summer Schools in Art, Film & TV and Theatre.

More information: vca-mcm.unimelb.edu.au/shortcourses or 03 9810 3276

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