Why we go back again and again to Nigella

BY SHARON WEBB

As you next sit salivating over Kate’s signature retro coffee cake with coffee butter cream on Masterchef, ask yourself: What attracts me to this kind of television cooking shows?

That’s the question Dr Michelle Phillipov from the School of English, Journalism and European Languages is attempting to answer with her research on television cooking shows.

Intrigued by ‘pleasures of the extreme’ – as evidenced by her forthcoming book on death metal music – Dr Phillipov believes it’s not a coincidence that the popularity of food television comes at the height of an obesity epidemic.

“Many of the messages presented to us about food are puritanical; we’re told that we eat too much of the ‘wrong’ food and this is a danger to our health. Most people do not cook and eat the foods they see prepared on television but they can enjoy seeing them being prepared,” she said.

“It’s about rediscovering food as pleasurable.”

The fact that many Australians find Masterchef, My Kitchen Rules, Fat’s Kitchen, Rick Stein’s Eastern Odyssey, Jamie’s Kitchen and Nigella Feasts unmissable could reveal the limits of public health messages, Dr Phillipov believes.

“If we’re presented with restrictive guidelines around healthy eating maybe we need a guilt-free release valve – taking pleasure in seeing forbidden foods prepared and enjoyed.”

This theory is boosted by the programs’ visuals: the way Masterchef judges make a point of taking a large spoonful of oyster and king prawn gumbo when they judge it, lingering camera shots on puddings oozing chocolate.

Nigella Lawson’s emphasis, as the camera feasts on her licking the spoon, on the ‘naughty’ ingredients – butter, cream and lots of free-range eggs – only serves to increase the sense of consuming forbidden fruits.

Sensually of course.

Families feeling the financial squeeze could be another reason for the success of these shows, Dr Phillipov said.

“Media comment suggests a key pleasure for many people is that they transform cooking into a form of leisure in times of financial hardship. Instead of going to restaurants they prepare special foods at home, evidenced by Coles supermarkets’ spike in foods purchased.

And of course there’s the very human motivation of one-upmanship: those who watch the shows learn the lingo of the top chefs, gaining cultural capital from understanding the use of a sous vide.

According to Dr Phillipov, competition between contestants also creates suspense, enticing us to come back – and we get attached to competitors who, after all, are just ordinary people like us.

Fish welfare test is a Trailblazer

BY SARAH NICOL

DR RYAN WILKINSON has been officially named one of Australia’s most innovative and inventive researchers.

The AMC researcher was runner-up in the open category of the recent National Trailblazer awards. He was presented with a $5000 prize and 12-month New Scientist subscription at the award ceremony.

Trailblazer recognises researchers with original ideas or concepts to benefit the community. Dr Wilkinson’s research is in aquaculture and his winning written submission and pitch discussed the development of a rapid, on-farm test for use in the aquaculture industry which will allow for the assessment and maintenance of high fish welfare standards.

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“The Trailblazer competition provided a fantastic opportunity for me to explore the commercial potential of my research idea and ‘pitch’ that idea to a panel of judges with interests in venture capital, intellectual property management and industry engagement,” he said.

Dr Wilkinson said the aquaculture industry was growing faster than any other food-producing sector.

“There was a spike in foods purchased.”

As a result, consumers, NGOs and activists want to know more about how these fish are produced and whether they are cared for correctly.

He said there was mounting pressure for fish farmers to demonstrate high welfare standards were maintained at all stages of production.

“This project aims to develop a rapid, on-farm test for use in the aquaculture industry which will allow the assessment and potential improvement of situations where fish welfare may be compromised,” he said.

“The overall goal is to integrate the test into existing welfare and quality assurance programs.”

At a state level Dr Wilkinson won the open category, a $3000 prize, as well as a $1000 prize for pitching excellence.

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Rick youthen for social justice

BY SARAH NICOL

A

ssociate Professor Rick Snell from the UTAS Faculty of Law lost his infamous locks and beard on 29 August in a bid to raise money for social justice.

He originally hoped to raise $10,000 for the Sandy Duncanson Social Justice Fund but managed to net $12,500, which will become $25,000 after the UTAS Foundation matches contributions. This will be added to the appeal tally, bringing the total to $42,500 from public donations since the end of last year.

“I didn’t expect to raise so much – I thought $10,000 a high target,” he said.

Donations came from as far away as South Africa and New Zealand and some individuals gave $500.

Assoc. Prof. Snell had his beard for 16 years and is enjoying the change.

“It takes a bit of getting used to in the shower but I’m feeling great – why wouldn’t you be with comments saying how good you look (see my Facebook page) or that I look 10–20 years younger,” he said.

Before and after the big shave for social justice: Associate Professor Rick Snell has raised $12,500 for the Sandy Duncanson Social Justice Fund.

Funds can still be donated online at http://www.utas.edu.au/foundation/sandy-duncanson-social-justice-fund or directly to Rick Snell.

Sandy Duncanson was a Tasmanian lawyer with a commitment to social justice. He died in 2010 after 16 years battling cancer. The fund was set up in his name to enable a student to carry out a social justice project or activity.

The total money in the fund is now almost $85,000, which well and truly establishes the fund and gives it the capacity to grow. Assoc. Prof. Snell said.

The first bursary of $2000 for a social justice project is now open for applications from any undergraduate student (not just law).
A life in the ‘plant stream’

BY LUKE SCOTT

People are always asking Roger Orr to look into his agricultural crystal ball. The advent of poppy-growing, the growth of greenhouses and the decline of the fruit industry are just some of the changes he has seen in Tasmania’s agriculture industry in the past 40 years.

Roger Orr retired from the Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research last month, after serving four years as senior agricultural officer and laughed when asked about his predictions for the future of the agriculture industry in Tasmania.

“Look, I think there are some good basics; people are always going to need food and we can grow it here. ‘We have an ideal climate for greenhouses production because we are not too hot or too cold so we can grow it here.’

Plums and peaches could be rediscovered and new markets developed.

Roger believes Tasmania’s vegie industry can only keep improving.

More and more going to mainland markets, apart from the processed vegetables we send,” he said.

“We supply into Melbourne and Sydney; those cities are growing and will have even larger demands. There will always be ups and downs, boom and bust, but I think we are well placed.”

Roger’s love of agriculture was sparked as a child, going to nurseries, orchards, bowling clubs and sports clubs.

Now, apart from potatoes, poppies are the major crop in Tasmania, both in area and economic return.

Getting the dirt on agriculture

LUCY SAXBY came from Melbourne to study agriculture at UTAS – with no farm background, which she says was pretty hard.

But last month she was one of 30 UTAS agricultural science students who moved their classroom to the paddocks of north-west Tasmania.

They visited cropping, dairy and grazing farms, and agricultural processing plants including Simplot, Serve Ag, Fosterra and Botanical Resources Australia.

“My Dad had a business buying and selling produce but he only got into food production recently,” Lucy said. “It was fantastic to get a taste of the many different types of farming in Tasmania.”

Senior lecturer in horticultural science Dr Alastair Gracie said the aim was to get students to understand what makes Tasmanian agriculture and horticulture industries competitive on a global market. They also got a feel for the scale and diversity of agriculture in the north-west region.

“They were fascinated by the scope and sophistication of farming and found it valuable to look at how the science they have learnt about in lecture rooms actually works in the field,” Dr Gracie said.

“Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of the trip was a massive eye opener about the practical side of farming.”

“Having seen the important of specialising in and both the science and economics of a particular crop or commodity, I am going to choose cropping and business subjects for my final year.”

Out on the farm: Agriculture students Lucy Saxby and Andrea Craigie get close-up with cropping and farming at Brandsema’s tomato-growing operation near Ulverstone.

Tassie’s agricultural history is appointed to the future: After 40 years there to teach Roger Orr hasn’t propagated, propagated, harvested and studied.

I used to work with fruit trees - all apples and pears. The apricot industry had disappeared 40 years before because of disease and other things. But apricots are coming back in, and so are cherries – they’ve boomed down south.

Understanding how UTAS might look in 2025 and beyond is no small task. The plan needs to be simultaneously bold and future-seeking, a contemporary interpretation of our enduring values and respectful of the university’s strong 10-year history.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the consultation process has been the breadth of internal and external engagement. Several hundred staff have attended forums held across the university’s campuses and there have been more than 1000 online submissions from individuals, organisations and community groups, and our students.

A strong theme to emerge has been the almost symbiotic relationship between the university and Tasmania itself, through geography, environment, social fabric, history and identity. The view that this relationship – and the associated opportunities – defines UTAS resonates clearly, as does the evident enthusiasm of staff, students and key stakeholders to explore how it can be manifest in teaching, research and engagement of special value.

These conversations will be reflected in core strategic priorities of learning, research, participation and engagement outlined in the green paper.

To thrive over the next 10 years, UTAS, as the sole university on the island, will need to juggle potentially competing agendas. We must both preserve a research mission that positions us as an institution of international excellence, and embrace the Australian Government’s ambitious agenda for 40 percent of 25-34 year olds to attain a bachelor degree or higher by 2025.

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George Clooney is the exception – the rest of us need Botox

DR PETA COOK, lecturer in the School of Sociology and Social Work, explores the phenomenon that is Botox ...

While we celebrate certain celebrities who age gracefully like Dame Judy Dench, or exult the distinctiveness that ageing brings to particular male celebrities, such as George Clooney, the signs of ageing are generally despised.

We are surrounded by images of what is considered normal and desirable – namely, looking youthful. Ageless faces parade before us, constantly reminding us of what we should be, what we should aim towards. Those cursed with wrinkles need to ‘manage’ and ‘correct’ this deviser sign of ageing.

The quest for youthful looks can even land some into trouble with the law as seen in the recent case of a New Zealand woman who allegedly filled a Christchurch clinic after $NZ7,780 ($620) of Botox treatment.

And the Cosmetic Physicians Society of Australia (CPSA) has raised concerns about beauty treatment companies advertising their services by offering coupon discounts. These discounted cosmetic procedures include anti-wrinkle injections, laser treatments and microdermabrasion.

The President of CPSA, Dr Gabrielle Caswell, stated that “these types of offers also encourage impulse purchases” and could “encourage excessive use of such procedures”.

But are such concerns justified and what can associations like the CPSA potentially gain from such public criticism?

The most famous and often reported about non-invasive cosmetic procedure, aimed specifically at filling and preventing wrinkles such as crow’s feet and forehead lines, is undoubtedly Botox.

While Botox is a registered trademark owned by the company Allergan, the media and social attention this product has received means that Botox has become a familiar reference for all cosmetic forms of botulinum neurotoxin.

Yet historically, botulinum neurotoxin has been a threat to humans. Ingestion can cause botulism, a paralyzing condition and, during World War II, there were attempts to turn botulinum toxins into biological weapons.

The history of this neurotoxin – a deadly food poison and destructive weapon of the 19th century – has been effaced by the media promotions of Botox.

Celebrities and politicians increasingly liken Botox to other widely available salon treatments, hair products, and even to cleaning one’s teeth. But injectables not only treat wrinkles but inject a welcome boost into declining retail sales.

Organisations such as the CPSA, seeking to protect the public by warning them of the potential dangers of bargain coupons ignore this already wide dissemination of Botox: it is a readily accessible, quick and affordable.

Cynics might view the CPSA warning as an attempt to retain this expanding client base and increasingly lucrative market.

But are such concerns justified? Surely we cannot be surprised if more and more retailers seek a slice of the injectables pie, or if clients flee after their ‘anti-ageing’ Botox treatments.

Talking about eHealth

BY BROOKE TURNER

Canadian and UTAS academics tackled the controversial issue of electronic health records recently and are planning future projects together.

Professor Andre Kushniruk and Dr Elizabeth Borycki from the School of Health Information Science at Canada’s University of Victoria visited the eHealth services research group in the School of Computing and Information Systems, funded by the UTAS Visiting Scholar Program.

Both work in the area of health informatics.

“We discussed patient safety, usability of systems, medical and nursing informatics, health professional education, as well as electronic health record use and adoption in Canada, Australia and internationally,” Dr Borycki said.

Prof. Kushniruk presented a seminar on designing usable healthcare information systems and applications. UTAS will also host another six week visit from health care informatics expert Professor Christian Nøhr from Aalborg University, Denmark next month.
Eureka for Devils’ Advocates

BY PETER COCHRANE

A team of researchers based at the University of Tasmania has won one of Australia’s top science prizes for its work in trying to save the Tasmanian devil from extinction.

The ‘Devils’ Advocates’ team – co-led by Dr Menna Jones of the School of Zoology and Associate Professor Greg Woods from Menzies Research Institute Tasmania – was awarded the $10,000 Sherman Eureka Prize for Environmental Research at a gala dinner in Sydney on 6 September.

The annual Eureka Prizes, presented by the Australian Museum, honour Australia’s brightest minds in science research and innovation, journalism and communications, and leadership. The devil team was one of three University of Tasmania finalists this year, Associate Professor Michael Bredmose (Outstanding Young Researcher category) and Professor Paul Haddad (Outstanding Mentor) also being short-listed.

The devil is an ‘iconic’ creature, Assoc. Prof. Woods told ABC Statewide Morning on Threatened Species Day, which coincidentally came hard on the heels of the Eureka Prizes presentation. “It is such a high-profile animal and the research we are undertaking has implications for other species.”

The judging panel praised the research team for its “brilliance and tireless dedication”. Assoc. Prof. Woods said that the collaborative nature of the team would have appealed to the Eureka judges. “We have people from different backgrounds working together with the one object in mind – to save the devil. So we’ve got genetics, ecology, immunology … a whole range of disciplines represented.”

The awards night itself was “pretty humbling,” Dr Jones said. “You don’t go into science to win awards but it is nice to get recognition. When our names were called out we were numb for a couple of seconds, and in fact had to be told, ‘Hurry up – you need to be on stage!’”

Dr Jones said of the ramifications: “Winning a Eureka Prize will help highlight the plight of the Tasmanian devil and will also open doors, for us and the devil”.

“The really critical thing is that we try to bring devils back into the Tasmanian ecosystem to fulfill their ecological role as a top predator in suppressing cats, foxes and over-abundant macropod prey,” Dr Jones said.

“This really should drive our management strategies.”

Artistic elements a win-win for chemists and artists

BY SARAH NICOL

A GROUP OF 18 printmakers and 79 chemists have bridged the gap between art and science by creating a periodic table of elements.

As part of International Year of the Chemist, UTAS chemist Dr Vicki Gardiner and Tasmanian printmaker Carolyn Canty, came up with the idea of creating a piece of art highlighting the importance of chemistry.

Each element was put on eBay and chemists, schools and organisations bid for the right to sponsor and describe the element to an artist who would portray their description through printmaking.

“It was win-win for everyone. The artists were given great exposure,” Dr Gardiner said. Uranium, carbon and hydrogen were the most sought-after elements, with carbon reaching $102.50.

Each artist created 15 prints of their element – four of which became part of four permanent tables. One will stay on permanent display at UTAS but the other three will travel around Australia and New Zealand. One print was given to the element sponsor.

In addition to the travelling displays, a website has been developed containing general information on the elements, including discovery, origin of their names, applications and Australian connections, as well as the printmakers’ description of the image. A poster has also been produced which will be sent to all schools in Australia.


This project was an initiative of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute and supported by Questacon.

Performing arts scholarship in memory of Leo

LEO COOPER-WHITE died in a tragic accident in Launceston earlier this year but his friends and family are working hard to establish the first UTAS performing arts scholarship in his memory.

Together with the UTAS Foundation, they are seeking support for the Leo Cooper-White Memorial Scholarship Appeal which will establish a scholarship at the University of Tasmania’s School of Visual and Performing Arts (SVPA).

Leo Cooper-White was a third-year student at the SVPA with a passion for theatre and big dreams for the future. He discovered his love for the performing arts late in high school and studying at the SVPA brought him into contact with new influences and areas of the performing arts he hadn’t previously imagined. During his university studies, Leo’s interest in physical theatre grew, expanding both his skills and confidence in this area.

On 18 March 2011, Leo’s life was cut short and his family and the close-knit community of the SVPA feel his loss deeply.

Kim White and Allison Cooper-White, Leo’s parents, said of the scholarship plan: “Through this scholarship Leo will continue to inspire SVPA students for years to come and help future students who never knew our son.”

Donations to this appeal, matched by the UTAS Foundation, will become part of a fund to provide the scholarship each year in perpetuity at the SVPA. The appeal aims to raise $30,000 to endow a $2,000 annual scholarship.

For more information or to support this appeal, visit the UTAS Foundation website at: www.utas.edu.au/foundation/donate, or contact the UTAS Foundation on (03) 6226 1900 or email foundation@utas.edu.au
In brief

Chemistry celebration

Current and former members of the School of Chemistry gathered at the UTAS Sandy Bay campus to celebrate the 50-year anniversary of the opening of the chemistry building.

To commemorate the milestone UTAS Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen unveiled a model of the periodic table showing samples of the elements.

Head of the School of Chemistry Associate Professor Greg Dicinoski described the periodic table as a monument to human intellect.

Former organic chemistry lecturer John Bremner, who taught at UTAS for 23 years, said he’d seen many changes to the school over the years, mainly in the technology used.

The one-day chemistry symposium included speakers from each decade for the past 50 years, detailing past events and hopes for the future.

This year also marks 10 years since the Australian Centre for Research on Separation Science was established. In that period the team has published 500 papers, received $24 million in funding, secured 12 ARC Fellowships and graduated 80 PhD students.

Market at Grote Reber Telescope

The Grote Reber Telescope will play host to a selection of gourmet produce and bric-a-brac stalls as part of their first community market day in October.

School of Maths and Physics Executive Officer Karen Bradford said the event was part of the museum’s community outreach program and they were hoping to attract a crowd.

Some of the stallholders include the Lark Distillery and the Meadowbank Estate winery, as well as artists and crafts, plants and bric-a-brac.

There will also be a barbecue and free entry to the museum with postgraduate students leading tours there and around the Mt Pleasant Telescopes.

Anyone interested in holding a stall should contact Karen at: Karen.bradford@utas.edu.au

The community market day will be held on Saturday 29 October from 10am until 4pm at the Grote Reber Museum near Cambridge.

Guide to responsible research

UTAS researchers are being encouraged to take advantage of workshops detailing the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. Jen Bruyn Schmidt, the recently-appointed research integrity coordinator at UTAS, said the university has established a stepped committee to oversee implementation of the code, released in 2007 to guide institutions and researchers in responsible research practice. Compliance is required to receive funding from NHMRC and ARC.

“The goal is to support researchers to conduct high-quality research by raising awareness of legal and ethical requirements, providing guidance on best practices in research and clarifying roles and responsibilities of those involved in research,” Ms Bruyn Schmidt said.

“We’ll be holding face-to-face meetings and have established a section within the Research Integrity and Ethics website to keep everyone up to date with progress.”

For more information see: www.utas.edu.au/research-integrity-and-ethics

Research

Lack of minerals possible cause for nailbiting

BY SARAH NICOL

Nearly a third of children and teenagers are nailbiters and a UTAS researcher wants to find out why.

Thuy Le is studying the causes of nailbiting (onychophagia) as part of her masters degree at the University Department of Rural Health. She believes it may be caused by a mineral deficiency in the body but she needs volunteers to help her.

Thuy first became aware of the frustrations parents encounter with children biting their fingernails during her time working as a community pharmacist.

“About 15 months ago, I had a customer desperately begging me to find a cure to treat her son's nailbiting,” she said.

“She was struggling to watch her child biting his nails until they bled and had tried many methods in the past such as bitter nail polish and punishment for nail biting but none had been successful.”

“I had never thought nailbiting was such a big issue or a stubborn disorder to treat.

“It can affect parents and the children psychologically, socially and health-wise.”

The complications can be clinically mild or serious and include such impairments as nail fragments embedded in the gums, tooth resorption, serious infections of bacteria, virus and parasites and painful injuries.

An answer to nailbiting: Thuy is looking at why people bite their nails and how to stop it.

She was struggling to watch her child biting his nails until they bled and had tried many methods in the past such as bitter nail polish and punishment for nail biting but none had been successful.’

Thuy is testing her theory that it is caused by mineral deficiencies or imbalances in the body and has tried the minerals on some customers successfully: the challenge is finding the right imbalance mineral.

The implications of the findings of this research will be directed towards the development of both effective and long-lasting treatments and prevention strategies.

Thuy will conduct surveys and interviews with parents of nailbiters and health care professionals.

She needs 80 to 100 parents with children who are either nailbiters or have been in the past, and 40 to 50 health professionals. Any interested participants who meet the selection criteria, please contact Thuy at thuyel@utas.edu.au or title@utas.edu.au.

Tasmanian kidney donors needed for organ transplant survey

BY SARAH NICOL

Worldwide there is a shortage of organ donors and new technology may soon be able to fill that gap. However, it is not yet known if this will encourage or discourage people from donating their organs.

Dr Peta Cook at the School of Sociology and Social Work is conducting the world’s first study into the potential impact of xenotransplantation on human donation rates.

Xenotransplantation refers to the process where living cells, tissues and organs are transplanted in humans.

Dr Peta Cook is conducting a world-first study into views on xenotransplantation and organ donation.

She has interviewed participants in Victoria, Queensland and South Australia but is in need of more Tasmanian participants.

The study involves a one-hour interview. Dr Cook will ask participants about what made the decision to donate easy or difficult, what procedures should be continued or improved in the process, as well as reactions and perceptions xenotransplantation.

“As a world first into examining the reaction of organ donors to xenotransplantation, I hope that Tasmanians will be involved in this important research” she said.

For more information, contact Dr Cook on: (03) 6324 3545 or peta.cook@utas.edu.au.

Kidney donors needed for research: Dr Peta Cook is conducting a world first study into views on xenotransplantation and organ donation.

Tasmanian kidney donors needed for organ transplant survey
Flying high and solo

BY LUKE SCOTT

Simon Ancher’s work in his first solo exhibition Life Specifics is most noticeable for its sweeping lines, odd angles and hidden details.

“It is my first solo exhibition and is the culmination of the last five or six years’ work,” the UTAS furniture design program director said.

“The inspiration came from a journey I took on a Boeing 747. I had a window seat, and I was looking at the wing, the way the end of the wing flicked up. I was thinking about the fineness of the wing, the tapered elements and the intriguing qualities.”

“My clipped wing bench seat is the first successful piece of furniture from those investigations, and the subsequent pieces in the show are variations and further investigations into that form.”

“I am constantly observing,” he said.

“That’s what I teach my students, too: be constantly questioning, be observant and don’t assume anything. Sometimes it’s just a door handle that takes you fancy, the way the materials interact, that make you remember it for later.”

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“Sometimes it’s just a door handle that takes your fancy, the way the materials interact, that make you remember it for later.”

Simon exhibition is on display at the Launceston Design Centre until mid-October.

My PhD

Chloe Cadby

School of Zoology

A slippery topic

Chloe Cadby is examining how female lizards are adapting to climate change to protect their unborn babies.

“Reptiles are really sensitive to climate so they are really good indicators. And climate has such a strong effect before they are born,” she said.

Chloe said reptiles have been left out of most predictive and descriptive studies with regards to climate change.

“My work was aimed at understanding how climate affects offspring phenotype and how mothers can mitigate the effects of climate during embryogenesis either through behavioural or physiological mechanisms,” she said.

“For example, if it’s really warm, they can bask less. So we were seeing if the mother might play a role in mitigating the effect of climate change.”

“We looked at two populations that live in different climates. One is in the central highlands and one in Orford. We looked at how the different populations have adapted to their respective climates.”

“There was a strong difference; where it’s cold, the females tend to bask more.

“Even if you put them in the lab in the warmth, they have adapted to bask more, no matter what the conditions are,” she said.

“Getting a better understanding of the effects of climate as well as maternal responses and input will prove an essential step if we are to make predictions of the effects of climate change in this species and reptiles in general.”

“Reptiles are really sensitive to climate so they are really good indicators. And climate has such a strong effect before they are born.”

Man (and woman) versus wild

BY JANETTE BRENNAN

A BUSHWALKER was shot with an arrow, a climber fell out of a tree, a diabetic slipped into a coma, a camper was bitten by a snake and three motorists were involved in car crashes – all during a recent wilderness retreat for UTAS students in Dover, southern Tasmania.

“And it was quite a bit of fun,” said Associate Professor Geoff Couser from the Hobart Clinical School, within the UTAS School of Medicine.

“Okay, so you’ve probably guessed by now that all of these ‘medical emergencies’ were actually role-playing exercises that were developed to educate and test students within the field of emergency medicine. The 36 students were armed with only the items that they’d normally carry in their pack for an overnight bushwalk (such as food, some outdoor gear, and a basic first aid kit). The students were then divided into teams to work through the different scenarios, guided by a doctor or a paramedic.

“The main point of this was to try to get the students to think outside of their normal circumstances,” said Assoc. Prof. Couser.

“For this exercise we used a wilderness setting and wilderness scenarios but the medical problems were common ones. So it was a chance to test the students’ resourcefulness and resilience, as well as their ability to work within a team.

“Of course it was also a nice way to teach medicine. Southern Tasmania is such a beautiful wilderness. It’s something a bit different and special for our UTAS students, as opposed to what medical students get in a big city.”

While the wilderness weekend has become an annual event for the Clinical School, 10 paramedic students were also included for the first time this year. As an emergency specialist at the Royal Hobart Hospital, Assoc. Prof. Couser thought the inclusion of the paramedic students was particularly valuable.

“I think the students were a little bit suspicious of each other initially,” he said. “The medical students were a bit worried that the paramedic students were going to show them up.

“But everyone got to know each other and began working as a team. That’s important because it reflects what will actually happen in a real-world environment. Knowing each other well and working as a team improves patient care, so we may as well get that happening at the undergraduate level as well.”

The wilderness weekend also featured input from staff at Ambulance Tasmania, the Australian Antarctic Division, Royal Hobart Hospital, and the State Emergency Service.

Team work: UTAS medical and paramedic students work with the Huonville SES to provide care to entrapped, injured victims of a simulated car crash.

Sharp lines: While the clipped wing bench may look fragile, designer Simon Ancher (pictured, right) says the angles align to keep it strong.
Awards celebrate passion and commitment

The University of Tasmania gathered recently to present the annual vice-chancellor’s excellence awards in teaching, research and community engagement at the 2011 Celebration of Excellence Award Ceremony.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Peter Rathjen presented the awards at the Sir Stanley Burbury Theatre in Sandy Bay, commenting that they celebrated the university’s striving for excellence and acknowledgment of those who had contributed to this quest in an outstanding way.

“The success of UTAS is the result of the passion and commitment we all have in what we do. That daily contribution ensures the university continues to thrive and grow and to have a real impact on our institution as well as in the wider community in which we operate,” he said.

“From time to time some of our members stand out from the crowd for the significance of their contribution. It is their contribution that we are celebrating specifically.”

Prof. Rathjen told the gathering of academic and professional staff that he was proud of the impact UTAS makes at a local level and its contribution to Tasmania.

“I am equally proud of our global reputation and the national standing we have as a truly international institution.’

– VC Professor Peter Rathjen

“I am equally proud of our global reputation and the national standing we have as a truly international institution,” he said.

“Your work demonstrates the

2011 vice-chancellor’s excellence awards in teaching, research and community engagement

Citations for an Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning

**Dr Bill Baker**
Faculty of Education

For a sustained commitment to teaching and to learning support that influences, motivates and inspires pre-service teachers to use music in primary and early childhood education.

**Associate Professor Greg Dicinoski**
School of Chemistry

For a decade of commitment to the introduction and use of flexible teaching methodologies and improved student laboratory experiences.

**Dr Ashley Edwards**
School of Zoology

For approaches to teaching and learning development that motivate and inspire students to learn and enable other teachers to enhance their approaches to learning.

**Dr Colin Jones**
Australian Innovation Research Centre

For the ongoing development of a truly student-centred learning curriculum through which student transformation to the concept of ‘the reasonable adventurer’ is possible.

**Dr Roslyn Malley**
School of Medicine

For development of a pathology curriculum centred on supporting and encouraging engagement to prepare medical students for their later clinical years and their future profession.

**Lindsay Smith**
School of Nursing

For development of innovative online learning materials and teaching strategies in health science units that meet student-learning needs, motivate participation, and enhance capability outcomes.

**John Vella**
Tasmanian School of Art

For the development and implementation of group-centred learning strategies across diverse studio contexts.

**Engaging art:** John Vella and Lucy Bleach from the Tasmanian School of Art won a community engagement award for their MACHINES art programs which exposes high school students to a wide range of art practices.

**Far left, clockwise from top left** Individual achievement: Tracey Muir received a community engagement award for promoting numeracy through a number of mathematics activities. **Rare species:** John Keane, Stewart Frusher, Peter Walsh, Fiona Brodribb and Greta Pecl from IMAS received a community engagement award for the Redmap project, which encourages sea users to report sightings of uncommon marine species.

objectives we are striving for in our Strategic Plan. We need to embrace those objectives and build on the strengths we have shown to enhance our reputation locally, nationally and internationally.

“You have achieved this through your unwavering diligence and excellence in the performance of your profession.”

**2011 vice-chancellor’s excellence awards in teaching, research and community engagement**
Achievements

Distinguished Service Medal for Prof Canty

In every university a small number of staff members stand head and shoulders above the crowd because of their fine scholarship and leadership, and willingness to contribute unreservedly to the advancement of the university. Distinguished Professor Allan Canty is one such person.

Over his long and illustrious career Prof. Canty has consistently supported the university and the wider profession of chemistry by accepting leadership roles. He repeatedly undertook interim senior management roles; his leadership at school, faculty and university levels has been exemplary; and he has been twice elected by staff to the University Council.

Prof. Canty's career at UTAS began in 1973 as a postdoctoral fellow with Prof. Harry Bloom. He began lecturing a year later. More recently, Prof. Canty served as head of the School of Chemistry for 12 years and was the inaugural head of the newly-formed cross-campus school in 2001.

Prof. Canty also served two terms as acting Dean of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology and on three occasions served as acting Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research). During this time he managed the Research Quality Framework process and the Excellence in Research Australia initiative.

Prof. Canty said the highlight of his career to date has been recognition of his research in the form of election to the Australian Academy of Science, based almost entirely on research conducted in Tasmania. Fellowship to the academy is granted to scientists deemed to have created a significant contribution to their field.

Prof. Canty has been successful in achieving continuous Australian Research Council Discovery Grant funding for more than 20 years, with the most notable research achievement from this being the discovery of the type of chemistry of palladium bonded to organic fragments when the oxidation state of palladium is +4. This chemistry has led to a new field of organic synthesis.

Prof. Canty was conferred the title of Distinguished Professor by UTAS in 2009, and in 2010 his contribution to the chemistry profession was recognised by the Award of Distinguished Fellow of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute.

During his time at UTAS, Prof. Canty has seen numerous changes to both the institution and field of chemistry. “The main changes have occurred around increasing productivity resulting from technological advances, greater internationalisation via easier and less expensive travel, and significant improvements in research funding,” he said.

Prof. Canty's drive and enthusiasm for chemistry began young and the interest is yet to wear off.

“I chose chemistry due to fascination with a chemistry set as a child, at a time when access to toxic and dangerous chemicals was very easy and hazardous experiments in the family garage were permitted,” he said.

Prof. Canty was greatly influenced by the teaching skills of others. “I had two excellent teachers, as well as one very lazy teacher for whom all knowledge and understanding needed to be obtained personally from textbooks (very poor teaching but a great learning experience),” he said.

Prof. Canty is known and recognised through this award for his outstanding work in research, administration and teaching.

“I am particularly pleased that the rubric for the award recognises 'service' across the broad spectrum of academic activities, and it provides significant encouragement and support to continue research when retired from late 2012,” he said.

There can be few UTAS heads of school who can claim such research distinction as well as outstanding achievements in administration.

Dr Emma Warnecke
School of Medicine
For enthusiastic creation of a teaching and learning environment that inspires and engages medical students and encourages active and deep learning.

Professor Brian Yates
School of Chemistry
For inspiring students to learn, assisting colleagues to enhance their teaching, and providing national leadership in university science education.

The Bluefin Team
Australian Maritime College – Associate Professor Giles Thomas, Paul Furness, Dr Troy Gaston, Chris Lambert, Peter Schaeffer, John Vitieux
For the design and implementation of an innovative multidisciplinary program to foster students’ complex problem-solving skills through practical activities at sea.

(Above) Teaching excellence: (Clockwise from top left) Justin Walls, School of Medicine; Mathematics Education Team, Kim Beswick, Tracey Mair and Rosemary Callingham, Faculty of Education. (Right) Research excellence: Barbara Nowak.

Awards for Teaching Excellence
Associate Professor Justin Walls
Faculty of Health Science
Assoc. Prof. Walls has implemented a number of significant teaching and learning initiatives designed to address quality, curriculum development, student support and individual staff development.

Along with being a key contributor to medical and non-medical programs in the School of Medicine, he has published a wide range of scholarly works in teaching and learning. He has presented invited conference workshops nationally and published two integrated clinical textbooks.

Associate Professor Walls has also run major teaching and learning projects in the areas of curriculum evaluation, integrated curriculum evaluation and design, and simulation and was a key figure in the design of the School of Medicine’s newly implemented case-centred medical curriculum.

Distinguished Service Medal 2011: Professor Allan Canty. (Photo: Peter Mathew)
Achievements

Medal for research excellence

Emeritus Professor Jane Watson
Faculty of Education

Professor Watson is perhaps the most prominent statistician in the world. During her 39-year UTAS career she has made a significant and distinguished contribution to the university in mathematics education. Her record of achievement is impressive; almost 400 publications, including six books, 144 refereed papers and 20 book chapters.

Prof. Watson has been awarded 18 Australian Research Council research project grants equating to more than $2 million in funding over her academic career; this is an outstanding Australian achievement.

Her work on mathematics education is recognised internationally, especially her book Statistical Literacy at School: Growth and Goals, published in the United States in 2006.

Endorsing Prof. Watson’s research achievement in 2007, the US president of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Professor Shaughnessy, wrote: “… over the past decade, Watson has been one of the most active and prolific researchers in statistics education in the world.”

Prof. Watson has achieved a fellowship in the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, the 2010 inaugural Mathematics Education Research Group of Australia Career Research Medal and the 1999 Clunies-Ross National Science and Technology Award.

Mathematics Education Team – Faculty of Education

Associate Professor Kim Beswick, Associate Professor Rosemary Callingham, Dr Tracey Muts, Professor Jane Watson, David McBain, Ros Ashenden, Mrs Dianne Ashman, Neville Barnard, Bruce Duncan, Diane Nallon; Nicole Malhar, Brett Stephenson.

The Mathematics Education Team at UTAS has worked together over many years to provide coherent and effective sequences of units for pre-service primary and secondary teachers.

Continuing members of the team are recognised nationally for their expertise and have been influential in shaping national agendas including the Australian Curriculum for Mathematics and moves towards the national accreditation of teacher education courses, and teacher registration. They are called upon regularly to work with teachers within and beyond Australia. This, along with the strong nexus between their research and teaching, means that pre-service teachers receive mathematics education that is nationally and internationally current.

Dr Erik Wapstra
School of Zoology

This research is a sustained team effort to understand key questions in evolutionary ecology using local Tasmanian species.

Dr Erik Wapstra, School of Zoology

Professor Barbara Nowak, AMC

Award for an Outstanding Contribution to Research and Research Training

Professor Nowak is an outstanding researcher with a national and international reputation in the field of aquaculture, specifically aquatic animal health. Her research and teaching network spans many countries in Europe and the Americas. She is a valuable member of staff in the National Centre for Marine Conservation and Resource Sustainability.

Prof. Nowak has built a strong research team. She consistently attracts domestic and international research students to undertake research, either by her reputation in external circles or by her impressive teaching and knowledge base. Many of her students have gained senior or important positions in the science or health management field.

Prof. Nowak also clearly demonstrates leadership through her mentoring of post-doctoral staff, the provision of advice to other academic staff, and through her service on the National Centre Research Committee.

Dr Michael Breadmore
School of Chemistry

Award for Internationally Recognised Research

Dr Breadmore is the equal-fourth most prolific scientist in the world to have published in the field of electrophoresis and has published the 36th most cited article out of the 55,113 articles published on this field.

He has 79 publications, including two book chapters, to his credit and over the past three years has published 36 articles, double the national discipline norm for a research-only academic; his work has been presented in 89 international conference presentations.

Dr Breadmore has a good history of success in obtaining external research funding, including $5 million from nationally competitive Australian Research Council grants. In research training, he has been involved in the supervision of nine PhD students.

Professor Jeffery Summers
School of Psychology

Award for Internationally Recognised Research

Professor Summers is recognised internationally as a leading expert in the study of inter-limb coordination.

He has published extensively in leading international journals in the fields of motor control, experimental psychology and neuroscience.

Over the course of his career Professor Summers has been successful in attracting research funding totalling more than $2.7 million and has been offered visiting research positions at leading research institutions in Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Canada.

Dr Erik Wapstra
School of Zoology

Award for Internationally Recognised Research

Dr Wapstra was cited in a recent review for a Future Fellowship application as having a research record that “stakes his claim as an emerging world leader in his field”.

His record of continual Australian Research Council Discovery funding, since appointment is exceptional in an environment that is increasingly competitive, and his international reputation as a research leader is evidenced by the number of invitations he receives to deliver plenary talks at international conferences.

He is invited to write review articles in high-profile journals such as Trends in Ecology and Evolution and was guest editor of a theme issue for Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London.
Dr Delphine Lannuzel, IMAS
Awards for Programs that Enhance Learning
Ingrid Apsitis
Faculty of Business
For her highly successful corporate internship program which offers, through collaboration with Tasmanian business organisations, an individually-tailored, work-integrated, learning experience for students enrolled in degrees in the Faculty of Business.

Centre for Advancement of Learning and Teaching
Dr Sharon Thomas, Dr Gary Williams, Dr Natalie Brown, Dr Robyn Lines
For development of the graduate certificate in learning and teaching, a course that models best practice and is underpinned by a strong research base and the contribution of scholarly practice from the course leaders.

Dr Delphine Lannuzel, Menzies Research Institute
Award for Outstanding Research Performance by Early Career Researchers

Dr Lannuzel has published 20 papers in international journals in the five years since completing her PhD working in Antarctica to determine the role of limiting trace elements in ecosystem productivity.

Her success with seeking and obtaining fellowships is unparalleled, with awards from the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, cosmetics manufacturer L’Oréal, the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science and the Australian Research Council.

Her achievements have been recognised by invitations to the Australian Academy of Sciences Shine Dome in Canbera, invitations to chair international meetings, and to give invited presentations in the US, Europe and Australia.

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Autumn rainforest in Erriba

BY ANNA OSBORNE

North-West Coast landscape artist Kerry Martin didn’t have to look too far for inspiration for her latest collection of works. She simply walked into her own backyard.

Kerry’s surrounds became her studio with her 25-acre property in Erriba providing the perfect backdrop. “I usually paint what’s in my environment,” she said. “For example, if I’m living in a city situation I paint people; in rural areas I paint landscapes.”

Covenant is Kerry’s new exhibition which opens at the UTAS Cradle Coast campus’ Atrium Gallery this month. It features nine large works of oil on linen, including one four-panelled piece. The collection depicts the landscape’s various seasons and settings, reflecting her forest’s rich colour and haunting shadows. “Last year my property had a conservation covenant put on it,” she said. “The paintings have all been created using my forest as the subject and the word covenant means to bind or secure so it fitted nicely as a title.”

After growing up in rural New South Wales Kerry has worked as an artist across Australia and travelled in Europe, Britain and the USA. She has lived and worked extensively in central Australia over 20 years. Her surrounds have influenced her works; Tasmania’s world-renowned terrain continues to catch her eye in a unique way.

“Tasmania’s hidden stories are probably one of the most unique aspects,” she said. “There is such a strong sense of melancholy in the history here. I find it poignant that many of the stories of Indigenous people have been lost and when I immerse myself in the forests I understand how important beauty is to our spiritual wellbeing.

“When I look at significant features of the land I imagine how Indigenous people’s law (and lore) would have revered such beauty. ‘Covenant, in a small way, is my acknowledgement of that.’”

The work

Unigym Hobart: Named Tasmanian Fitness Business of the Year and in the running for the national award.

BY SARAH NICOL

Unigym Hobart has been named Tasmanian Fitness Business of the Year and is headed for the Fitness Australia national awards.

“It’s a very exciting time and great to be recognised in the fitness industry,” the manager of Sport and Recreation Gina Poulton said. She said the award came after major refurbishments, finished in 2010.

“Afeter the renovations our membership has grown considerably.

“Unigym now has the largest fitness class offering in the south of the state; we’re very competitive. “In recent years the gym’s focus has changed from purely sport and fitness to a more holistic approach to fitness, health and wellbeing,” she said.

“There is an emphasis on staff training and affordable membership.”

Gym representatives will be presented with a trophy and $2000 at the gala award ceremony in Brisbane this month.

All state award winners are automatically in the running to win the National Fitness Business of the year award, announced in October.