$12m cash splash for seafarer training

BY NICOLE MAYNE

The Australian Maritime College is set to train more seafarers than ever with a funding injection by the federal government of $12 million for vocational education and training. The Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, announced the funding on a recent visit to the AMC, where she chatted with students about their aspirations for jobs in the maritime sector and said she is serious about ensuring a future for the Australian shipping industry.

The funding allows the AMC to deliver more than 160,000 hours of specialised training to more than 500 maritime students a year, supporting a national approach to seafarer training as part of the federal government’s shipping policy reform.

The funds will be delivered over four years, enabling the AMC to sustain ongoing training courses for VET students who come from all over Australia and to develop new, world-leading programs. Ms Gillard said the investment represents the latest in a number of initiatives aimed squarely at keeping Australian shipping strong.

“It will help rebuild the Australian shipping fleet and the skills base needed to keep the industry growing and prospering into the future,” she said.

“Together, with our shipping reforms, funding for AMC will see the college train more seafarers than ever before, with more jobs available on Australian-flagged ships.”

It was the Prime Minister’s second visit to the AMC in four years, her first being in 2009 when she attended in her capacity as Deputy PM and Minister for the ship simulator before meeting representatives from AMC, UTAS and the wider community.

Both UTAS Vice-Chancellor Peter Rathjen and AMC Principal Neil Bose welcomed the funding. “This funding has secured the future of maritime VET training courses in Australia, thus supporting the training needs of this important industry sector,” Professor Rathjen said.

“It will provide a stable base for AMC to compete internationally and help build on the already impressive economic benefits delivered by AMC to the state through students and research.”

$12m for national seafarer training: Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced a vocational funding boost for the Australian Maritime College on a recent visit.

$27m ARC grant for lobster and food industry research

UTAS HAS secured $27m in collaborative research funding from government and industry for two projects, as part of the Industrial Transformation Research funding from the Australian Research Council.

The funding will support world-class research with high economic impact in Tasmania, in areas such as sensor technology, aquaculture, food production and sustainability and supply chain management. The Industrial Transformation Research Hubs scheme encourages collaborative projects to address challenging industry issues and is dependent on attracting private and international investment in targeted industry sectors.

The two successful projects are a rock lobster project through the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies with a total value of $16.9m and a Pathways to Market project through Sense-T with a total value of $10.1m. This funding is expected to deliver up to a further $5m in research infrastructure funding from the federal government.

UTAS is one of only two universities to receive funding through the scheme out of nine universities that applied. It leads the nation in the latest round of ARC funding.

The $7.5 million ARC funding component represents 52 per cent of the government funding awarded nationally for the research hubs, placing UTAS as the lead funding recipient. Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen congratulated UTAS researchers on their success, which he said reflected the outstanding research environment at the university.

“Today’s results highlight the strength of our global research relationships and the exceptional quality of our researchers.”

What a Life! exhibition by Professor Roger Fay, NEW Gallery, Newnham, 5 July–2 Aug
Nepal experience opens eyes of UTAS trainee doctors

BY ANNA OSBORNE

Their aim was to get hands-on experience a world away from their own environs and two Rural Clinical School students achieved that in their international placement in Nepal. Fifth-year UTAS students Nick Voon (RCS Burnie) and Alex Willows (RCS Hobart) recently spent four weeks on placement at the Association of Medical Doctors of Asia’s Primary Healthcare Program for Bhutanese Refugees.

The program was based in Damak, Nepal, where Nick and Alex experienced medical scenarios from delivering babies to conducting tuberculosis clinics for refugees.

“It was unbelievable, a real eye opener for me,” Nick said.

The AMDA Nepal operates three hospitals, provides an academic program for health-related courses, supplies health and nutrition services.

At the camp Nick and Alex visited there was only one doctor for 25,000 patients. Here, the two medical students worked alongside health professionals, applying and testing a range of skills and beliefs.

Nick said they didn’t want to spend their summer elective in a major teaching hospital, preferring to experience a different health-care environment.

“To see first-hand what life is like in a refugee camp really makes you appreciate what we have back here,” he said.

“Things like materials and equipment are a real necessity there.”

This is the second time the AMDA has hosted UTAS medical students. The chair and secretary of AMDA Nepal, Dr Rishikesh Shrestha and Dr Anil Das, recently visited the Rural Clinical School in Burnie for a community lecture.

Bouquets

Gabriella Tregurtha

Gabriella has been awarded the Steve Balcombe Southern Water Scholarship, from Southern Water, valued at $3,000 a year for the period of study. Gabriella is completing a science/engineering degree and doing work experience at Southern Water during university holidays. The scholarship helps talented students to get the best out of their studies and to give them exposure to the water industry, with a view to attracting high-quality graduates into the field. Southern Water said many past recipients are now working in leadership positions in their fields.

David Gwyther

Ocean modeller David Gwyther has won a Fulbright Postgraduate Scholarship and will spend 12 months at the University of Texas at Austin helping to develop models of ocean and ice shelf interaction. David’s research will use data and observations from the international ICECAP project to help model the way the ice and ocean interact more than 2,000 metres below the ocean’s surface in the Totten Glacier region of east Antarctica. He is doing his PhD through the CSIRO-UTAS Program in Quantitative Marine Science and will take up the scholarship in July.

Trevor Redding, Anthony Lufi and Hanna Chard

Trevor, Anthony and Hanna have been awarded 2013 Jim Bason Scholarships, valued at $10,000 for one year. Hanna is a medical scientist in haematology. She is investigating the particular haematological changes seen in cancer patients following chemotherapy. Trevor has completed his Bachelor of Fine Arts with a double major in photography and art and design theory, and plans to enroll in a PhD to further his desire to pursue a career in teaching, researching and mentoring. After completing honours in political science Anthony hopes to join the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
How UTAS helps drive the Tasmanian economy

Most Tasmanians recognise the important role the University of Tasmania has played since 1890 as the state’s provider of higher education and world-quality research. The benefits to Tasmania in terms of educational, social and cultural outputs are widely understood.

But with budgets tightening at both national and state levels, and a pressing need for Tasmania to build economic activity and regional prosperity, it is time for a different conversation about UTAS.

Higher education has for many years been among the top three export industries in Australia, together with iron ore and coal, and the top export earner within the services sector. It is the single largest export industry in Victoria.

Accordingly, most states have identified higher education as a key component of their local economy. Recognising that universities compete globally for students and research funding, they describe through their economic development plans how this can be harnessed to their advantage. Tasmania, at present, is conspicuously quiet on this matter.

So how does UTAS perform from an economic perspective?

In 2013 the annual budget of UTAS will, for the first time, exceed half a billion dollars. Most of this is derived from competitive activities, with only 3.1 per cent of our non-capital budget provided by the state in 2012. We spend some $280 million on salaries, providing employment for more than 6,000 people across a range of fulltime, part-time and casual positions.

The total UTAS economic contribution to Tasmania is estimated at some $1.7 billion a year. This figure takes into account a range of activities, spread across Tasmania by virtue of our campuses located in key regions of the state, including the impact of our skilled graduates in the economy.

Throughout 2012 (excluding casual staff) we employed 1,828 people and enrolled 15,995 students in Hobart; employed 788 people and enrolled 7,793 students in Launceston and employed 129 people and enrolled just over 1,000 students in Burnie — the last-mentioned a significant milestone for UTAS.

We increase opportunity for those who choose to study with us. In 2012 we hosted 29,240 students at UTAS, 7 per cent more than in 2011. As a university we rank among the nation’s finest in teaching and research, and across the world within the top 3 per cent of universities. Our degrees are internationally recognised; our graduates benefit from the global opportunities this brings, and lifetime earnings of some $1.5 million greater than for those who do not enter higher education.

International students at UTAS contributed almost $200 million to the state economy in 2012. Each of the students who move to Tasmania from the mainland or overseas brings a wealth of economic benefit beyond university fees — they seek accommodation, invite family and friends to visit and spend money in the state. The tourism sector is a major beneficiary.

There is room for significant improvement here, with demand for placements from the emerging middle classes in Asia and South America projected to grow steeply in the next few years. Given the right partnerships and policy settings, and building from growth of some 12 per cent in 2013, we have identified an opportunity to double international student revenue in Tasmania to $400 million a year within the next five years.

Our island state is enriched by the diversity of experience, culture and thought that these students bring to us from around the globe. UTAS research underpins the competitiveness of Tasmanian industry and contributes to the development of new, highly skilled, economic opportunities for the state. This enterprise is larger than many realise — nearly $200 million a year. In recent weeks, we have identified an opportunity to double international student revenue in Tasmania to $400 million a year within the next five years.

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The construction industry is benefiting from $564 million expenditure on capital works at a time of relatively depressed activity. In the Hobart CBD alone the Medical Science 1 and 2 buildings will be opened shortly and IMAS on the waterfront is well advanced.

Council to watch over UTAS cultural collections

By Peter Cochrane

A new Cultural Collections Advisory Council has been established at UTAS to advise on the development and promotion of the university’s art and other cultural collections.

Having had its first meeting in April, the council will also advise on potential acquisitions, the staging of exhibitions, and the formulation of policies and programs, and on opportunities for obtaining financial and other support from within and outside the university.

The 24 members comprise ex-officio and appointed staff from the university, and invited members from the wider community in Tasmania, Australia and abroad.

The university’s cultural collections are many and varied: they range from the Fine Art Collection of 2,500 works by modern and contemporary Australian artists to the UTAS library’s special and rare books to pottery, coins and other artefacts from ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, Greece, Etruria and Rome housed in the John Elliott Classics Museum.

They’re also widely dispersed. Most of the works are hung in the foyer, theatres and corridors of the campuses in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie, or stand in the campus grounds.

Recently the overall catalogue was bolstered by the arrival from Washington DC of some 600 works, many by Cornelia Petruscu and other Romanian artists, part of a generous bequest by an alumnus, the late Geoffrey Tyler, and his wife Frances.

On the eve of the first council meeting, during her third visit to Tasmania, major donor Frances Tyler said her husband had suggested she be part of the Cultural Collections Advisory Council.

If some of the works from the Tyler Collection end up on the walls of Domain House, once it has been restored to its former Gothic glory, that would be fitting. As a student at UTAS, Geoffrey Tyler attended physics lectures in that building.
Making choices in the Tarkine

Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick from the School of Geography and Environmental Studies considers why the Tarkine is special for conservationists

In Australia, we ride on the open cut mine's back. In the island state of Tasmania, there is a medium-size-class open cut mine (928 hectares) with 210 hectares of settling ponds, from which iron nodules are piped 85km through the middle of the largest rainforest in Australia (262,940 hectares).

This rainforest is part of the Tarkine, a name made up by conservationists for an extensive tract of wild country in the north-west of the state. Much of the Tarkine region is highly prospective for minerals. Some of it is more than prospective, with the development of new mines currently being proposed to complement those that already exist and replace those that have closed down.

Short-term jobs and profit oppose nature conservation, promising a debate of equal virulence and divisiveness to that about logging of Tasmania's old-growth forests.

We know why developers, politicians and people in economically depressed regions love mines, but why are conservationists so passionate about the Tarkine forests that they propose to sacrifice themselves to prevent new mines?

What characteristics of the Tarkine forest make it special for them?

Conservationists correctly perceive the area of forest in Tasmania not logged or disturbed by mining and/or stock grazing is small (approximately 1 million ha) compared with the original 5,514,217 hectares of forest in the state. More than 200,000 ha of such forest occurs in the Tarkine.

The trees in most of these forests were established well before Europeans occupied Australia. Research published in Forest Ecology and Management suggests one individual tall Tasmanian eucalypt is 509 years old.

Some Huon pines on the rivers of the Tarkine are likely to be more than 2,000 years old. The trees have a harmony, complexity, detail and lushness irresistible to the nature photographer, and emotionally overwhelming for many others.

"The forests have a harmony, complexity, detail and lushness irresistible to the nature photographer, and emotionally overwhelming for many others."

Some of the best examples of the expression of different types of vegetation through feedback to fire regimes can be found in the Tarkine. The flammable buttongrass moorlands and eucalypt forests to the west of the rainforest send sparks to light up ridges within the rainforest, maintaining them as eucalypt forest. A recent paper in the Journal of Biogeography provides strong evidence that patterns of ignition by human beings have had huge effects on the distributions of rainforest and other vegetation types.

Conservationists hope the maintenance of wild forests in protected areas, free of roads and mines, will reduce such incidences of ignition, allowing the largest rainforest in Australia to survive intact.

The values of the Tarkine forests we have described above defy ready conversion into dollars or jobs. Like our economy, they are the product of values that are not shared by all of our species.

However, it is possible for us to determine how important the Tarkine is in representing each of them, a task with which we are presently engaged.

We can then ask questions like: is the money from a mine more important than risking the loss of some of the largest patches of callidendrous rainforest on earth? Is the Tarkine more important than risking the loss of some of the largest patches of callidendrous rainforest on earth? Is the Tarkine more important than risking the loss of some of the largest patches of callidendrous rainforest on earth? Is the Tarkine more important than risking the loss of some of the largest patches of callidendrous rainforest on earth? Is the Tarkine more important than risking the loss of some of the largest patches of callidendrous rainforest on earth? Is the Tarkine more important than risking the loss of some of the largest patches of callidendrous rainforest on earth? Is the Tarkine more important than risking the loss of some of the largest patches of callidendrous rainforest on earth? 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Brightest ag science minds get a boost

They came together under the UTAS Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture tent at Agfest: traditional farmers, second- and third-generation farmers, industry suppliers, educators and governing bodies.

TIA's annual scholarship awards at Agfest are an institution, passing an important baton to future primary producers and agriculture scientists.

The recipients were from all around Tasmania, interestingly mainly females, and all extremely grateful for the assistance in pursuing their chosen field of study.

An opportunity for scholarship donors to catch up with their students and talk about their studies, TIA representatives were kept busy talking to young people and their parents about the many career opportunities for agricultural science graduates and research; development and extension staff showcased their current work to a wide cross-section of the Tasmanian community.

In the UTAS HealthStop tent more than 80 trainee pharmacists, exercise physiologists, nurses and doctors and their supervisors engaged young and old with their full suite of medical equipment to conduct tests and give advice on all aspects of health care.

From making sorbolene cream and real plaster casts to checking out SimMan and having their blood pressure measured, it proved a popular exhibit.

The UTAS careers stall in the Trades Expo Pavilion also drew in many potential students and had some fun dressing up children in their "dream career" and giving them a polaroid photo for inspiration.

Scholarship certificates presented were:

Robert Gatenby Tasmania University Scholarship in Agricultural Science $4,000 per year for up to three years. From the estate of Robert Gatenby, who was an innovative Tasmanian farmer and horticulturalist before his death in a light plane crash in 1992. Available to a student eligible to enter second year of the Bachelor of Agricultural Science.

Recipient: Elya Richardson of Hobart.

Bruce Wall Estate Honours Scholarship (Agriculture/Aquaculture) $4,500 per year for up to four years. The estate of the late Bruce Wall supports a number of scholarships each year in agricultural science and aquaculture as well as Tasmanian youth projects.

Recipient: Daniel Goss of Scottsdale.

AgVita Scholarship in Agricultural Science $4,000. Devonport-based AgVita Analytical is a professional laboratory offering soil, plant and water analysis nationally.

Recipient: Elizabeth Jolly of Forth.

Beef Industry Trust Scholarship $4,000 per year for up to three years. Provided by the Tasmanian Beef Industry Trust to assist students with an interest in the beef and cattle industry. Available to a student eligible to enter the second year of a course in the School of Agricultural Science.

Recipient: Rebekah Smart of Hobart.

Bert Campbell Memorial Scholarship in Agriculture $2,000. Provided by the Agricultural Contractors of Tasmania to honour the memory of Bert Campbell, a pioneer in harvesting, cereal production and the poppy industry.

Recipient: Victoria White of Crabtree.

George Wade Scholarship in Agricultural Science $2,000 per year for up to four years. Provided by the family of the late Professor George Wade, a respected plant pathologist who established the School of Agricultural Science at UTAS in 1962. Offered to a talented Tasmanian student entering the Agricultural Science course.

Recipient: Amy Lucas of Sandfly.

Other major scholarships recently awarded include the Neale Edwards Scholarship in Agriculture, $6,500 per year for three years, recipient Rowan Snare (Wynyard); and the Robert Menary Scholarship in Agriculture, $4,000 per year for three years, recipient Aaron Thomason of Sandfly.
Among the more than 100 Sydney graduands from the faculties of Business and Health Science were 31 admitted to the degree of Bachelor of Paramedic Practice.

They were, as noted by the deputy chancellor, Harvey Gibson, who presided at the ceremony, the first New South Wales cohort to be admitted to this degree at a Sydney graduation ceremony. (It is also delivered on the Domain campus.)

After two years of intensive study, including three one-month blocks of practical experience, the graduates are now finding their feet in their initial 12-month postings, many scattered around the eight zones of the greater Sydney metropolitan area, others in regional NSW and at least one in the ACT.

Apart from the performance of Queen’s Bohemian Rhapsody by a string quartet and the anecdote-filled occasional address by the new head deputy chancellor, Harvey Gibson, delivered on the Domain campus, the ceremony was notable for the ‘cheer of the greater Sydney metropolitan area.

Practical experience, the graduates delivered on the Domain campus, some of the more than 100 Gatton graduation ceremony, observed by Michael Sim.

Graduations

Graduation jubilation: Bachelor of Nursing graduate Brenda Zinyuke joins in the euphoric atmosphere at the recent Sydney graduation ceremony, observed by Michael Sim.

**Trailblazer paramedics graduate in Sydney**

BY PETER COCHRANE

A sixe in the Bachelor of Paramedic Practice course after completing a Diploma of Policing and Bachelor of Nursing degrees. “I was accepted for both but chose nursing which I thought would allow me to find work overseas. However, after studying for a year I decided that my future was as a paramedic.”

**Stuart Bradshaw**

Stuart Bradshaw had worked just four “pretty crazy” shifts at Bankstown just 15 minutes’ drive from his home in south-western Sydney when Unitas spoke to him. Three months of clinical placements chalked up over the two years of the fast-track degree – including two months at Bankstown and one at Liverpool – had prepared him for the reality of being a first responder. However, it has not been without its challenges. “Dealing with trauma is one thing, but it has been a lot more emotionally challenging than I expected, such as knowing what to say to someone that does not exacerbate the situation.”

Stu enrolled in the Bachelor of Paramedic Practice course after applying for Bachelor of Policing and Bachelor of Nursing degrees. “I was accepted for both but chose nursing which I thought would allow me to find work overseas. However, after studying for a year I decided that my future was as a paramedic.”

**Simon Chivers**

At 49 Simon Chivers is the oldest of the NSW cohort, his first posting as a paramedic in Sydney’s north. In addition to three one-month placements during his UTAS degree, Simon was able to complete brief locums in London, Edinburgh and Evaniville, Indiana. “I started out as a research scientist at the Royal Botanical Gardens before going overseas for a few years. Then I went into project management in construction. Finally, my wife and I became professional stage actors, touring Australia for 10 months of the year, for five years, performing at about 150 shows a year. When daughter Lily started Year 1 the touring ended. Simon decided to pursue a lifelong interest in medicine by enrolling in the paramedic course while his wife opted for film directing. “My decision to study involved the whole family. Because the course is full-time and fast-tracked you have to throw yourself into it – you must stop work for two years,” he explained.

**Hayley Freer**

Hayley Freer has been posted to Balgowlah on Sydney’s northern beaches, not a world away in terms of environment from her home on the Central Coast, despite the daily commute of one hour and 20 minutes each way. Each week she works two day shifts (7am-7pm) and two night shifts (7pm-7am). “There have not been too many surprises so far,” she says. “UTAS students are provided with a total of three months on-road prac time before graduating. This is quite a bit more than some universities. The UTAS paramedic degree teaches in line with NSW Ambulance, ensuring graduates are familiar with ambulance service protocols and as prepared as possible to transition into the workplace. Pip and Paula have a wealth of knowledge to share, and all our tutors are on-road paramedics who come to the campus during their days off.”

**Sarah Mead**

In her posting to Wentworth, Sarah Mead has ventured further afield than any of her colleagues – as she puts it, “as far as you can go and still be in NSW”.

Although Sarah is a country girl, a posting to the bush wasn’t her first, “I nominated Sydney East (central Sydney) as my first choice. Nevertheless, after nearly six hectic years in Sydney East (central Sydney) as an EMT, and after nearly six hectic years in Sydney, not a world away in terms of environment from her home on the Central Coast, despite the daily commute of one hour and 20 minutes each way. Each week she works two day shifts (7am-7pm) and two night shifts (7pm-7am). “There have not been too many surprises so far,” she says. “UTAS students are provided with a total of three months on-road prac time before graduating. This is quite a bit more than some universities. The UTAS paramedic degree teaches in line with NSW Ambulance, ensuring graduates are familiar with ambulance service protocols and as prepared as possible to transition into the workplace. Pip and Paula have a wealth of knowledge to share, and all our tutors are on-road paramedics who come to the campus during their days off.”

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**Serena Sayed**

“Every day is different, everyone is different,” says Serena Sayed of the appeal of her profession. Serena has had “some interesting jobs” in her first month working with ACT Ambulance and is delighted to be paired with a partner who is a fine mentor. After stints in age-care nursing and youth work Serena’s future was always going to be in the community health sector. Her paramedic training with NSW Ambulance gave her a “good taste of what it was going to be like after graduation”.

“My posting to Broken Hill 230 kilometres to the north and in Balranald 180 kilometres to the south-east as well as Mildura just across the border.” She pays tribute to her Rostelle campus lecturers Pip Lyndon-James and Dr Paula McMullen: “Thanks to them, I arrived in Wentworth well prepared for this initial 12-months placement.”

for what can be a difficult working environment.” adds fellow graduate Hayley Freer about the emphasis put in this course on getting out of the classroom and on the road. “When we combined with students from another university for an extreme emergency scenario, there was an obvious difference in that we had much more real-world experience behind us.”

The coordinator of the Sydney paramedic practice program, Dr Paula McMullen, is as compliments about this first cohort. “The staff is incredibly proud of these graduates’ accomplishments. Their hard work and commitment was infectious.”

“They truly lived the values that are espoused in the course objectives – that is, ‘A community of learning that integrates humanistic values if integrity, account-ability, respect and teamwork to achieve a paramedic degree of the highest standard’.

“They’ve set a very high benchmark for our future students and other universities to strive to achieve,” Dr McMullen said.

**Unitas**

June 2013 number 368
The Alzheimer’s journey

BY FIONA HORWOOD

J ohn Haynes was diagnosed eight years ago with Alzheimer’s disease. There were a couple of outstanding incidents before the diagnosis that made John’s wife, Bubbles, realise something was not quite right.

“Ten years ago, John was active in assisting with the running of Targa Tasmania. One day he was supposed to start off the competition at one of the stage points, but he was unable to coordinate with the countdown and a friend had to take over,” Bubbles said.

“It was worrying and embarrassing and not like my John,” she said.

Another notable incident occurred shortly after John retired. A friend asked him to do all the quantity surveying for a building company, where he had worked. John did the work and managed the workers.

“The quote was well off, even I knew it was totally incorrect,” said Bubbles.

Without the assistance of Alzheimer’s Australia Tas, The Parikside Foundation and Carers Tasmania, Bubbles says the journey would have been horrific.

“As John became more dependent on me, Alzheimer’s Australia Tas helped me with counselling and home support. “One of the most difficult situations I have ever had to endure was when I had to organise for John to have his driver’s licence revoked. John had been a racing car driver and a member of an advanced driver’s group attending workshops for 40 years. He was an extremely competent and safe driver until his illness started to cause problems.”

“It is up to loved ones and family members to control the situation and make the heart-breaking decisions.”

Last October, John suffered a mini stroke and was admitted to the Royal Hobart Hospital. It was decided that John needed to be moved to the older person’s acute care unit. The specialist advised the Haynes that it was time for John to go into permanent care.

“I was given time to come to terms with this decision. At all times my needs and John’s were respected.”

“Since mid-November, John has been in Snug Village in the dementia secure ward. He is close by, he is well-loved, and he is well cared for and safe during this stage of his illness.”

“Continuing research into the disease gives us a reason to hope. Although in early stages, maybe this new evidence could help our loved ones. If not us, the next generation could be spared the distress, fear and sadness of the Alzheimer’s journey.”

Discovery may lead to new Alzheimer’s treatments

To transfer information quickly in our brain, our nerves are insulated like electrical cables. If nerve cells lose their insulation they can short-circuit and information is no longer transferred to where it is needed.

We know from diseases like multiple sclerosis that losing insulation makes nerve cells extremely vulnerable to damage and death. This may also be true for patients suffering from Alzheimer’s disease and schizophrenia.

There is a growing body of evidence indicating brain insulation is lost in Alzheimer’s disease before nerve cells are damaged. In fact, insulation loss could contribute directly to nerve cell loss.

By studying brain scans from patients with Alzheimer’s, researchers have found the amount of insulation that is damaged matches the level of the patient’s dementia. The more damaged the insulation, the worse the person’s memory problems.

Collaborative research spanning the United Kingdom, Australia and Japan has determined that the cells responsible for making brain insulation (called oligodenodrocytes) are not the passive bystanders to brain function that we once thought.

Dr Kaylene Young, a senior research fellow at Menzies Research Institute Tasmania, and her colleagues have determined that insulating cells, the cells that protect our nerves, are made from immature cells in the brain called OPCs (oligodenodrocyte precursor cells).

Dr Young says this new research demonstrates that new insulation is added to brain circuitry every day.

“The addition of new insulation to nerve cells can change the way that our brain circuits function,” she said.

“This continued addition of insulation is likely to be very important for learning, memory, vision and co-ordination, and has important implications for nervous system disease.”

Dr Young and her colleagues are currently investigating ways to hijack the natural ability of OPCs to make new insulating cells.

“Their aim is to stimulate OPCs to produce more insulating cells, in order to repair the insulation damage that is seen in the brains of Alzheimer’s patients. Stimulation of OPCs in the brain is an appealing possibility since they are found throughout all brain regions, meaning that they are already where they need to be.”

“If we succeed in repairing the damaged brain insulation, and can re-wrap the ‘at risk’ nerve cells, we may be able to protect and prevent these nerve cells from dying.”

“Protecting nerve cells would prevent the rapid mental deterioration seen in people after they are diagnosed with AD,” she says.

This research was recently published in the international journal Neuron.

UTAS books

Women, Infanticide and the Press, 1822-1922: News Narratives in England and Australia
by Nicola Goc, School of Humanities, Ashgate, 2013

In her study of anonymous infanticide news stories appearing from 1822 to 1922 in Britain and in the penal colony of Australia, Nicola Goc reveals both the broader patterns and the particular rhetorical strategies journalists used to report on young women who killed their babies. Newspapers provide a way to investigate the practices that brought the nineteen-century infanticidal woman into being. The actions of the infanticidal mother were understood as a fundamental threat to society, not only because they subverted the ideal of Victorian womanhood but also because a woman’s actions destroyed a man’s lineage. For these reasons, Goc demonstrates, infanticide narratives were politicised in the press.

Grounds for Respect: Particularism, Universalism, and Communal Accountability
by Kristi Giselsson, School of Humanities, Lexington Books, 2012

In recent years traditional foundations of respect for others have been challenged on the basis that universal grounds — the assumption that we share a common humanity — have resulted in the exclusion of particular others from full moral consideration or respect. This current questioning of the concept of a common humanity is of enormous significance. This book attempts to address the question of just what grounds are needed in order to justify respect for others, and in addressing this question raises issues of fundamental importance; such as, what exactly does it mean to be human? The author not only critically assesses past and current arguments for and against a common humanity.

Learning Cocoa with Objective-C
by Paris Butfield-Addison and Jonathon Manning, School of Computing and Information Systems, O’Reilly, 2012

This technical book covers the developing of iPhone, iPad, and Mac applications, helping readers get up to speed on Cocoa and Objective-C, and start developing applications on the iOS and OS X platforms. From object-oriented programming to storing app data in iCloud, this book covers everything needed to build apps for the iPhone, iPad, and Mac. Readers can learn how to work with the Xcode IDE, Objective-C’s foundation library, and other developer tools such as Event Kit framework and Core Animation. Along the way readers can build example projects, including a simple Objective-C application, a custom view and others.

Neuron.

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Art & Events

EXHIBITIONS

21 JUNE
Honours and postgraduate coursework Art by 13 honours and postgraduate students from the College of the Arts, Hunter St campus.
Time: 12pm–5pm, until 30 June
Venue: Fooks Gallery, UTAS Newnham campus
Information: (03) 6324 4410

5 JULY
What a life! Photos, drawings, academic papers and archival material which has shaped the thinking of Professor Roger Fay, now retired from the School of Architecture and Design.
Venue: NEW Gallery 2, UTAS Newnham campus
Time: 9am–5pm, until 2 August
Information: Malcom Bywaters (03) 6324 4410

19 JULY
Shawn Gladwell: Afghanistan Video art by Shawn Gladwell, the Australian War Memorial’s official war artist in 2009 in Afghanistan.
Time: 9am–5pm, until 15 September
Venue: Academy Gallery A, UTAS Inveresk campus
Information: Malcom Bywaters (03) 6324 4410

PUBLIC LECTURES

1 JULY
15th Annual Dare Short Public lecture Professor Paulo de Souza on how engineers and scientists are exploring Mars and the solar system

5 JULY
Binding times Artist books and visual journals from across Australia.
Venue: New Gallery 2, UTAS Newnham campus
Time: 9am–5pm, until 2 August
Information: Malcom Bywaters (03) 6324 4410

5 JULY
Moments Selected artworks by Mary Ballantine
Venue: Academy Gallery B, UTAS Inveresk campus
Time: 9am–5pm, until 2 August
Information: Malcom Bywaters (03) 6324 4410

THEATRE

24 JULY
The Photo A play by Stephen Sewell, directed by Robert Lewis and Nicole Lewis. Contains coarse language and adult themes (MA15+).
Venue: Sir Raymond Ferrall Centre, UTAS Newnham campus
Time: 6pm
RSVP: (03) 6348 7010; gold coin donation

16 JULY
The Royal Society of Tasmania: Winter Lecture Series 2013 Future proofing the food supply: food security and innovation in Tasmania
Venue: Sir Raymond Ferrall Centre, UTAS Newnham campus
Time: 7pm, until 27 July
Information: 1300 783 448 or email admin@tatsoc.org.au

Tickets: Princess Theatre, Launceston
Van Diemen’s Land and back again – a Tasmanian perspective on the pursuit of global justice.
Time: 5.30–8pm
Information: (03) 6324 3052 or email Alumni.Office@utas.edu.au

ALUMNI

25 JULY
Melbourne alumni event Drinks and canapes: guest speaker Helen Szoke, UTAS alumna and CEO of Oxfam Australia.
Venue: RACV Club, 501 Bourke St, Melbourne
Time: 5.30–8pm
Information: (03) 6324 3052 or email Alumni.Office@utas.edu.au

24 JULY
Brisbane alumni event Drinks and canapes: guest speaker Tim McCormack. From the Netherlands to Van Diemen’s Land and back again – a Tasmanian perspective on the pursuit of global justice.
Time: 5.30–8pm
Information: (03) 6324 3052 or email Alumni.Office@utas.edu.au

For a complete list of, or to contribute to, What’s on visit: www.utas.edu.au. Contributions are free but may be edited.

Portrait of a practising, prolific artist

Portrait 2 is in Hilton Owen’s preferred mix of paints, an oil and acrylic on canvas, and is an intriguing mix of expressive and more controlled brushstrokes.

“It’s like some of my other recent paintings: a mixture of different looks, not styles, that I’ve used to create works where I do not feel ‘stuck’ or repetitive,” he said.

In some ways it’s not thinking, it’s just judging.”

The Hobart artist and UTAS alumnus’ artistic career is taking off; after holding his first solo show at 17 in a city café, he has held one or two exhibitions every year, both in Tasmania and on the mainland.

“I’ve had 12, coming up to 13, solo shows. I’ve never been scared about showing my work,” he said.

Now 24, with a Bachelor of Fine Arts under his belt from UTAS and working on a BA, Hilton is selling works at Handmark Gallery and recently exhibited at the Morris Miller library on UTAS’ Sandy Bay campus.

Initially he was interested in graphic design and was awarded a scholarship to pursue the subject at university. But after studying graphics for a year he decided to focus on painting.

“Some of my paintings have been influenced by graphic design, in terms of the composition and certain colours, which come from when I was interested in creating logos- all of those things have fed into my paintings,” Hilton said.

Like other creative people, his inspiration ebbs and flows.

“It can be a real struggle when it doesn’t flow naturally. I often tear canvases off because I don’t like to paint over them.

“But when things are flowing I can do two paintings in a day and finish them, if I’m lucky.

“My work evolves through practice and for me that is important, otherwise I could not do it.”

Hilton cites artists Francis Bacon and Lucien Freud as key influences, as well as Picasso and Van Gogh.

“I think Francis Bacon has done some of the best portraits. Freud moulds the faces of his portraits with paint to create an ultra-real but painterly look. That’s what Van Gogh did too, take paint and make it look more real than it actually is.

“I am at a point where I can enjoy and appreciate the work of other artists without it creeping too much into my own work, which is not an easy point to get to.”

Portrait 2 by Hilton Owen: An intriguing mix of expressive and more controlled brushstrokes.

What’s on