Hobart gardeners stake their own patch

By Michelle Nichols

Tasmanians like to do their own thing with their front yards and new research in 32 suburbs proves it.

Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick and his team from the UTAS School of Geography and Environmental Studies recently prowled Hobart's suburbs to find out what influences private home-owners to plant or remove trees in their front gardens.

They found that these free-thinking, non-conformist Hobartians did not feel pressured to have a garden like those of their neighbours. Hobartians "possess a stronger sense of their right to do as they will" with their own patch and less of a "feeling of moral obligation to blend in", the study found.

But guess what? People in Montreal, Canada, are exactly the opposite.

There, neighbouring gardens were more similar than those up or down the street and more alike than those across the road. "Grant Daniels, Aidan Davison and I decided to test the prevalence of these relationships by using a random sample of groups of five front gardens from 32 suburbs," Prof. Kirkpatrick said.

Gardens in Hobart are diverse, lacking the "non-random effect of proximity on the characteristics of front yards" found in Canada.

And Prof. Kirkpatrick was surprised: "I expected some sort of influence but then found out that the answer was there is basically no contagion between neighbours," he said. "The diversity could be due to the different sizes and age of gardens, along with the enormous variation between individuals of different age, background, education and wealth in their preferences for different types of gardens.

"For example, tertiary-educated people tend to prefer the untidier and more arboreal form of garden. Their equally well-off older neighbour might like highly manicured flower beds and lawns."

It could also be a result of the lower degree of external control on privately owned land in Australia compared to some other countries.

"In some US states there are strong regulations about what a garden can contain and what it should look like. Residents living in subdivisions are bound by covenants preventing them from hanging their laundry to dry outside."

None of the paper's authors think that the Hobart findings are a bad thing, "as diversity in gardens reflects diversity in people and may be preferred by native wildlife".

Australia's changing urban tree estate: a socio-ecological study of patterns, causes and consequences is researching the planting and demise of trees in Australian cities. It is funded by a three-year $130,000 Australian Research Council Discovery Grant.

For more information see http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/urbantrees and http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/yourtree

No contagion in Hobart garden style: A UTAS team led by Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick found that Hobartians over 32 suburbs are not influenced by their neighbours' styles of garden.

Succulent win for Material Girl

By Merian Ellis

Success in the "art of succulence" has been rewarded for North-West artist and UTAS Education Faculty student, Frances Joyce.

Frances won the Rio Tinto Award for Overall Excellence at this year's Material Girl Annual Art Award and Exhibition celebrating International Women's Day.

The theme of the competition was "Succulence – Women of Sustainability", Frances' winning interpretation of the theme was a pastel on paper, Hello...Dabbling...Mwah!

"We dance like there's no tomorrow, only tonight, only this song....only this beat."

Frances' successful entry was inspired by the gathering of good friends to spend a night of frivolity, forgetting the day-to-day reality of being mothers and wives, as her artist statement explains:

We gather together for frivolous, desperate distraction and loving, laughing support. We dance like there’s no tomorrow, only tonight, only this song. ...only this beat. We hide behind our drink, our tight black cocktail dress, our ruby red wig, our metallic blue eye shadow... our false eyelashes that we flutter like black butterflies... our luxurious red lips, so SUCCULENT.....so ripe and ready for the picking. ....

Material Girl winner: Education Faculty student Frances Joyce's pastel, Hello...Dabbling....Mwah!

Rural mums needed for survey » See Tommy's mum, page 4
Something in the water in Law

UTAS Law Faculty supervisor David McGuire has been acclaimed a UTAS expert in approving, organising and filling in forms for maternity and paternity leave. Recently he’s getting plenty of practice with the Law School in the middle of a baby boom: five members of the general staff are busy juggling work and child rearing.

It’s not the first extremely productive period for the faculty, which went through a similar scenario 18 years ago when three law lecturers, the school’s publications officer and a secretary all had babies close together.

The recent baby boom started when faculty executive officer Miriam Chalk gave birth to Jemima 17 months ago. Miriam was followed by fellow faculty executive officer Rachel Davis with Ella now 14 weeks; administrative officer Rachael Ormerod with Jack now 12 weeks, and computer technician Matthew Taylor with Connan, born in late April.

The five are all first-time parents except for Rachel Davis who had her second baby this year. Rachel started the recent run on babies with her first child Amelia in 2006.

In late 1992 the current Dean of Law, Professor Margaret Oltowski, was one of the law lecturers working with a young baby. At the time, she was also studying for her PhD and regularly took her young daughter Sophie to the library in a sling.

Mike Brakey

| Mike Brakey | The UTAS Faculty of Education recently welcomed Mr Mike Brakey, CEO of the Tasmanian Academy, to the position of Adjunct Professor. Mr Brakey said he looks forward to the learning he can take from faculty students and staff and welcomes the opportunity to share on-the-ground educational leadership experience and expertise. Mr Brakey said the appointment is representative of the maturing relationship between the University and the Education Department, noting that it was a significant milestone in the development of the Tasmanian Academy. |

| Michael Beresford | Appointed Associate Professor in Theatre in the School of Visual and Performing Arts at the Sandy Bay campus, Professor Beresford is originally from Tasmania but has written and directed theatre professionally for several years in North Queensland. Formerly Artistic Director of HardSton Theatre Company in Townsville, Prof. Beresford was on the Regional Arts Development Committee of North Queensland. Recently he was invited to be a board member of the Australian Script Centre in Hobart. |

On campus

Rally against violence

Students gathered on the steps of the refectory at the Sandy Bay campus last month as a Tasmanian University Union-organised rally to protest against student violence.

The rally was organised after three incidents off campus in Sandy Bay involving attacks against students. The Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor David Rich, spoke at the rally, saying the University strongly condemns any violence or any form of vilification against its students or staff.

Prof. Rich said the University is continuing to work with Tasmania Police to address concerns about student safety in the community.

“It is distressing when any of our students or staff are victims of violence in the community,” Prof. Rich said.

Inspector Stuart Scott of Tasmania Police Southern District spoke at the rally as well, addressing students on personal safety. Insp. Scott said Tasmania Police encourages everyone to report assaults to enable police to take action.

For more information see Big picture page 3

Our people

Millard (Mike) Coffin

Professor Millard (Mike) Coffin is the inaugural Executive Director of the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS). Prof. Coffin was most recently Director of Research at the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton, an integrated collaboration between the University of Southampton and the Natural Environment Research Council, UK.

Originally from the US, Prof. Coffin’s background is in earth science. He was the inaugural chair of the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program Science Planning Committee from 2003 to 2005 and has written more than 100 research papers.

IMAS consolidates the University of Tasmania’s internationally recognised expertise in cold temperate marine and Antarctic research.

Mike Brakey

The UTAS Faculty of Education recently welcomed Mr Mike Brakey, CEO of the Tasmanian Academy, to the position of Adjunct Professor. Mr Brakey said he looks forward to the learning he can take from faculty students and staff and welcomes the opportunity to share on-the-ground educational leadership experience and expertise. Mr Brakey said the appointment is representative of the maturing relationship between the University and the Education Department, noting that it was a significant milestone in the development of the Tasmanian Academy.

Do you have a tidbit for ‘Our people’? Email news snippets on UTAS people to: Media.Office@utas.edu.au and mark your email subject: ‘Our people’.

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Contributions are welcome, but items with a branded appeal will be given priority. The Editor reserves the right to edit copy or hold it over for a later issue and is under no obligation to publish contributed material. The opinions expressed in Unitas are not necessarily those of UTAS. For a list of Unitas deadlines and guidelines, visit us at www.utas.edu.au/unitsa/unitas.html
**Medico’s up-close experience in Sudan**

**BY ALICE KNIGHT**

Last summer UTAS medical student Ben Hunn volunteered his medical skills in war-torn Sudan, saving lives by donating blood, treating sick children – and then leaving prematurely when a colleague was murdered only 50 m away.

Ben, who is completing his honours year in medicine, spent seven weeks at a medical clinic run by American medico, Dr Jill Seaman.

She has worked in Sudan for 20 years, establishing the Sudan Medical Relief project. Located in the southern Sudanese town, Old Fangak, the project was first established to treat tuberculosis but the clinic has expanded to treat other chronic infectious diseases such as kala azar (caused by sandflies) and malaria, and now takes in-patients.

Ben helped Dr Seaman with ward rounds and doing pathology work in the clinic’s laboratory. "In the morning I would do ward rounds with the translator because I didn’t speak Nuer, the local language," Ben said.

"I’ll give you a few phrases: ‘Does she have a fever?’ ‘It is a big or little fever?’ ‘Diarhoea? Nausea? Vomiting?’

Ben’s day was broken with a siesta as temperatures would reach over 40 degrees before dropping to about 30 at night. "In the lab I took blood or did fingerprick tests for malaria or kala azar, which is a parasitic disease that infects the organs. Tuberculosis is also common," he said.

"About 75 per cent of the cases were paediatric and usually they were dehydrated and had diarrhoea. ‘We would put in a drip, give them medication and keep them in until they improved. It was good to help.’

But many premature babies or babies infected with kala azar or malaria needed blood transfusions for which clinic staff donated blood.

"While I was there I gave blood twice, and my girlfriend Katie once, resulting in a baby living," Ben said.

The most difficult aspect of Ben’s experience was the language barrier. In the evening after the translator had gone home, those living close to the clinic were sometimesoken by the community health worker needing help on a difficult case.

So he learnt a few Nuer phrases. ‘Does she have a fever?’ ‘Is it a big or little fever?’ ‘Diarhoea? Nausea? Vomiting?’ ‘Ben and Katie’s trip was cut short after one of the clinic’s lab workers, Abraham, was assassinated outside the clinic. ‘Everyone went running. Then we heard more shots from the local soldiers.’ Ben said.

The assassination caused ‘Everyone went running. Then we heard more shots from the local soldiers.’

fighting in the village, forcing the evacuation of all international workers.

“It was stressful as Katie was sick and we had known Abraham for six weeks so we were both sad,” Ben said.

Despite having to cut his trip short, Ben plans on returning to Sudan to continue his relationship with the Sudan Medical Relief Organisation. Ben is exploring the possibility of registering it as a charity in Australia; it is currently registered only in America.

“I will definitely go back. My trip has made me less focused on my medical studies in Australia. While that endorses a strong statement, it is actions on the ground that will start to change community behaviour and attitudes.

UTAS approaches student welfare and student safety seriously; consequently we have a good track record for campus safety. We want our students to have an enjoyable time at UTAS and we are encouraging the community to help us achieve that. Undoubtedly there are tremendous benefits to Tanzanians being able to connect with students from Tasmania, interstate and overseas.

As UTAS we have an ongoing program of improvements to safety on campus: security patrols, lighting, help points, video surveillance and a staffed 24-hour security control room covering all three campuses and accommodation services. These improvements will continue and we welcome ideas and suggestions about other possible initiatives to help improve safety.

UTAS also works to empower and educate our students to be conscious about their own safety when they are off campus. While we can make the university’s campuses as safe as possible, it is impossible to have that same control off campus where our students live and interact.

We have a Student Experience and Cultural Awareness Taskforce, chaired by the Acting Pro Vice-Chancellor of Students and Education, Professor Gary O’Donovan, working closely with stakeholders including the Tasmania University Union, Tasmania Police, the State Government and local councils to look at ways of addressing the issue.

I welcome comments and suggestions to further improve our approach to safety. Please email UTAS.Taskforce@utas.edu.au

Warm regards

David Rich

Professor David Rich

**Student experience at the centre**

In recent weeks the university and the broader community has been responding to matters concerning student safety. This issue affects universities around Australia and it needs to be approached and responded to on a community-wide level.

Last month, the Tasmanian University Union organised a rally to focus on student safety, after three incidents involving assaults on students off campus. I have applauded the TUU’s initiative; certainly as a university we support any activity that helps raise student and community awareness about safety.

The university strongly condemns violence or vilification against its students or staff. UTAS has zero tolerance to any behaviour that impacts on safety and off campus.

Tasmania Police has indicated that Tasmania has recorded a low level of reported assaults against students but as far as the university is concerned even one incident is one too many.

Last year UTAS, with other Australian universities, strongly endorsed Universities Australia’s 10-point action plan to promote student safety in Australia. While that endorsement makes a strong statement, it is actions on the ground that will start to change community behaviour and attitudes.

UTAS approaches student welfare and student safety seriously; consequently we have a good track record for campus safety. We want our students to have an enjoyable time at UTAS and we are encouraging the community to help us achieve that. Undoubtedly there are tremendous benefits to Tanzanians being able to connect with students from Tasmania, interstate and overseas.

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Warm regards

David Rich

www.utas.edu.au/uc

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**Insomnia predictor for sheep-counters’ illness**

**BY MICHELLE GRIMA**

Tasmania’s insomniacs have something to think about in the dark hours of the night, with an invitation to participate in a new UTAS research project aiming to investigate the condition. The School of Psychology is about to conduct confidential interviews with people suffering from sleep deprivation or depression; interviews will be held in the next few weeks.

Project supervisor, Associate Professor Frances Martin, said the results of the one-hour interviews could help determine if sufferers are being treated for their primary condition.

“There is increasing evidence that the onset of depression, mood disorders and subsequent depressive episodes are predicted by insomnia,” she said.

“One of the key symptoms of depression being sleep disturbance, this project aims to determine which comes first.”

“It’s important that sufferers of insomnia are being treated for the right condition: either the insomnia or the depression.”

Assoc. Prof. Martin said between 10 and 14 per cent of adults suffered from insomnia, and 15 per cent from chronic insomnia. Women were 50 per cent as likely as men to suffer from sleep deprivation. She said the three types of insomnia are difficulty falling asleep, waking for long periods in the middle of the night or rising early in the morning. “As a result, people are suffering from daytime impairment with fatigue, concentration difficulties, disrupted mood and productivity losses.”

To participate: Project participants should be aged between 25 and 55, and be required for a one-hour interview about insomnia and/or depression experiences. Contact Assoc. Prof. Frances Martin, ph 6226 2362, or Penny Minehan, email pminehan@postoffice.utas.edu.au

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**Life in Sudan:** Medical student Benn Hunn and a Sudanese boy in Old Fangak.

**Big Picture**

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**Student experience at the centre**

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**Medical student Benn Hunn and a Sudanese boy in Old Fangak.**
Researching maternity services in rural communities is a personal experience for PhD student Ha Hoang, whose baby, Tommy, was born at the end of her Masters studies.

Her experience and those of other rural Tasmanian women motivated her to pursue her current PhD research.

“I started by investigating the cultural birthing practices of Asian migrant women in rural Tasmania and their barriers to accessing health care as a research Masters student,” said Ha.

“During the process I found out that not only do migrant women encounter difficulties in accessing maternity services but rural women in general face problems with regard to choices of care and continuity of care.

“They must travel hundreds of kilometres to give birth and for antenatal and postnatal care. These rural women’s stories urged me to extend my research on rural maternity services to the broader population.”

With an Australian Postgraduate Award to do her PhD, Ha is examining rural maternity services in Tasmania and how a decline in rural maternity services impacts rural communities.

Rural communities in Australia have witnessed the closure of at least half of their small maternity units in the past decade.

Research shows women giving birth experience various adverse effects associated with travelling, including stress, financial losses, separation from their partner, children and community, and lack of continuity of care.

The loss of maternity services also affects the sustainability of rural communities.

Ha believes the need to improve access to maternity services and outcomes for rural women is urgent. She aims to identify gaps between rural women's needs and current health care services in rural Tasmania.

“I hope my research will help improve maternity services for rural women and their social wellbeing,” said Ha.

“I am at one of the most challenging and exciting stages of my research journey: data collection. If you are a woman who had childbirth experience in rural Tasmania in the past five years, you are warmly invited to participate in the survey.”

To participate in the survey email Thi.Hoang@utas.edu.au. The questionnaire can be completed online at http://www.ruralhealth.utas.edu.au/maternity_survey/index.php (password ‘support’).

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BY MICHELLE NICHOLS

A group of postgraduate students recently took to the seas to gain valuable first-hand experience of biological and physical oceanography — and helped discover a new deep-sea canyon in the process.

After competing for places on the ship, the students from UTAS, the University of Western Australia and James Cook University took part in a new scientific training activity coordinated by the Australian National Network in Marine Science (ANNIMS).

*Southern Surveyor* left Hobart in late March with seven students bound for Fremantle in Western Australia, led by Professor Tom Trull from UTAS, and then continued with a second group of seven students from Fremantle to Broome led by Professor Anya Waite from UWA.

During both legs of the voyage, the students examined the flow and composition of the Leeuwin Current that brings warm waters southward along the West Australian coast and then across the Great Australian Bight towards Tasmania.

This current follows the edge of the continental shelf along most of its length, and during the second leg, the team discovered a previously unknown deep-sea canyon that cuts across the shelf. The new canyon has been named Trawl after one of Australia’s oldest European shipwrecks.

The trip also introduced the students to the fundamentals of shipboard oceanographic sampling.

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Astronomy gathering under southern stars

The biggest get-together of astronomers in Australia will be held in Tasmania at UTAS on 5–8 July when stargazers gather for the annual scientific meeting of the Astronomical Society of Australia.

Over four days, up to 200 delegates will discuss a range of topics at the meeting, being hosted by the School of Mathematics and Physics.

Organising committee chair and senior lecturer Dr Simon Ellingsen said the event is the biggest gathering for those working in and undertaking research about astronomy in Australia.

“It is the first time in 10 years that the meeting has been held in Tasmania. The meeting will cover all aspects of astronomy from research being undertaken in Australia to presentations by PhD students”, Dr Ellingsen said.

“There will also be an update on the AuzScope Very Long Baseline Interferometry (VLBI) Project, which comprises the construction and operation of the three new radio telescopes by the UTAS School of Maths and Physics at Mt Pleasant in Tasmania, Katherine in the Northern Territory and Yarragadee in Western Australia.”

Dr Ellingsen said the Harley Wood Winter School will be held just prior to the meeting to provide an opportunity for honours and postgraduate students to interact with experts in astronomy from both within Australia and overseas.

Stargazers unite: UTAS will be host to the largest gathering of astronomers in Australia in July.

Exploring the role of travel in Pacific region

Rod Edmond, Professor Emeritus in the School of English at the University of Kent in the UK, will be the keynote speaker at the Oceanic Passages conference to be held by the UTAS Centre for Colonialism and its Aftermath from 25-25 June.

Conference convenor Dr Anna Johnston from the School of English, Journalism and European Languages said Prof. Edmond will discuss re-enactments of nineteenth-century missionary activities in the South Pacific.

Our second keynote speaker is Professor Anne Salmond, Professor of Maori Studies and Anthropology at the University of Auckland, “She has written widely on cross-cultural contact in the South Pacific; her 2003 book, ‘The Trial of the Cannibal Dog: Captain Cook in the South Sea, was very well received.’

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“She has written widely on cross-cultural contact in the South Pacific; her 2003 book, ‘The Trial of the Cannibal Dog: Captain Cook in the South Sea, was very well received.’

Dr Johnston said: “We are interested in new approaches to the analyses of imperial voyaging; in the circulation of material culture, artefacts, ideas and people; and in the contemporary postcolonial aftermath of the imperialism of the eighteenth/nineteenth centuries.”

Conference of Antarctic visions

Following the success of the 2008 Imagining Antarctica conference at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, the UTAS School of English, Journalism and European languages will host Antarctic Visions: Conference at the University of Kent in the UK, will be the keynote speaker at the Oceanic Passages conference to be held by the UTAS Centre for Colonialism and its Aftermath from 25-25 June.

Conference convenor Dr Anna Johnston from the School of English, Journalism and European Languages said Prof. Edmond will discuss re-enactments of nineteenth-century missionary activities in the South Pacific.

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“William Fox, an expert in landscape aesthetics and author of Terra Antartica: Looking into the Emptiest Continent, will also speak, as will Dr Christy Collins of QUT.

Oceanic Passages keynote speaker: Emeritus Professor Rod Edmond, University of Kent, UK.

“While most Antarctic research is science or policy-based, this conference is for people working from a cultural and social viewpoint: visual artists, cultural geographers, historians, archeologists and literature experts.

Oceanic Passages seeks to bring together a diverse range of researchers to engage in meaningful interdisciplinary dialogue about the role of travel, mobility and oceanic geographies in the British Empire and in the Pacific region.

“We are interested in new approaches to the analyses of imperial voyaging; in the circulation of material culture, artefacts, ideas and people; and in the contemporary postcolonial aftermath of the imperialism of the eighteenth/nineteenth centuries,” Dr Johnston said.

For further information contact simon.ellingsen@utas.edu.au

TEDxTasmania conference

TEDx is a series of worldwide events bringing together the world’s leading thinkers and doers to share ideas in a variety of disciplines; TEDx Tasmania will take place on 18 June. Five live and several video TEDx talks will be delivered at the conference, which will later be available free to view online on the TEDxTasmania website. One of the speakers is the Head of Art and Design Theory at the UTAS School of Visual and Performing Arts, Dr Lycia Routon, who will deliver a talk called “e-memorials and conflict zones”. Dr Routon is a site-specific sculptor and a contemporary art historian. Other topics include “Ecosystems: Why we need to be addicted to change” by Dr Beth Fulton, CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research in Hobart, and “Why speed limits are so old-school” by Dr Bjorn Landdoff, who is a CISCO senior lecturer in internet technologies at the University of Sydney with the School of Electrical and Information Engineering and the School of Information Technologies. The conference will be held in the Annette Theatre, Academy of the Arts, Inveresk. Places are limited and tickets are available at http://bit.ly/tedxtasmania.

For further information, please contact Associate Professor Aaron Quigley, Director, HITLab Australia, UTAS School of Computing and Information Systems (03) 6324 3977 or see the website at http://www.tedxtasmania.org
Governor opens Furniture Design building

The Governor of Tasmania has opened the new University of Tasmania Furniture Design building, saying he believes it will play a large role in preserving and developing the skills of fine furniture craftspeople in Tasmania.

His Excellency, the Honourable Peter Underwood, said that the $2.3 million building at Inveresk would develop an industry gaining national and international recognition.

"Tasmania is an especially appropriate location for this specialist teaching facility because of its abundance of fine timber," he said.

The Furniture Design building is part of the School of Architecture and Design. It is attached to the historic railyard building which is the home of the majority of the School of Architecture and Design.

The acting head of the School, Professor Stephen Loo, said the building is part of a new direction for the Bachelor of Environmental Architecture and Design (Furniture Design) and the Associate Degree in Furniture Design.

"Graduates may choose to work as independent furniture designers and makers or collaboratively with furniture manufacturing companies," he said.

"The building represents a new direction in furniture design in Tasmania because it gives us new avenues for investigating and experimenting in terms of contemporary furniture."

The Furniture Design building was designed to blend architecturally with the rest of the School.

"The design is a good example of a contemporary interpretation of a traditional large ‘shed’ and an industrial building," Prof. Loo said.

"The building represents a new direction in furniture design in Tasmania because it gives us new avenues for investigating and experimenting in terms of contemporary furniture."

The acting head of the School, Professor Stephen Loo, said the building is part of a new direction for Architecture and Design, incorporating the Bachelor of Environmental Design (Furniture Design) and the Associate Degree in Furniture Design.

"Graduates may choose to work as independent furniture designers and makers or collaboratively with furniture manufacturing companies," he said.

"The building represents a new direction in furniture design in Tasmania because it gives us new avenues for investigating and experimenting in terms of contemporary furniture."

The Australian Government funding of the Mersey Centre of Excellence is part of a nationwide strategy to boost training in rural communities.

"The new centre will add another dimension to the way clinical training can be delivered at the Mersey Community Hospital," Prof. Walker said.

In 2010, 50 per cent of the intern intake at the NW Regional Hospital was filled by UTAS medical graduates, and the NW Area Health Service’s ability to recruit specialists to the region has improved.

Centre of excellence for North-West rural doctors and nurses

Almost $1.5m will be spent redeveloping part of the Mersey Community Hospital at Latrobe as a Centre of Excellence for Rural Clinical Education.

The Australian Government funding of the Mersey Centre of Excellence is part of a nationwide strategy to boost training in rural communities. The new centre will help to ensure that students undertaking rural training have access to top-quality facilities.

The redevelopment will include the establishment of a clinical skills and simulation centre, multi-use teaching spaces, learning hubs and study areas, new staff offices and separate clinician and student lounge areas.

The new centre will extend clinical training opportunities at the Mersey Community Hospital. These include medical and nursing undergraduate clinical training, enrolled nurse training and postgraduate clinical training. It will also help to ensure that students undertake rural training have access to top-quality facilities.

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Farming great talent

Especially interested in the areas of pasture production, crop production for the Tasmanian environment and animal nutrition and production systems, he chose to study agricultural science because he has a keen interest in animal genetics.

“When I complete my university studies I’ll look for employment in the agricultural industry, maybe as an advisory agronomist or crop field officer,” Rhys said.

He hopes to combine an agronomist position with a focus on farming and would like to continue with a breeding program of his own stud cattle.

Bert Campbell was an innovative Tasmanian farmer and founding member of the Agricultural Contractors of Tasmania.

Helene will travel to Denmark to study agricultural science at the University of Copenhagen. Originally from Westbury, she grew up on a farming property.

“I believe more research into more sustainable agricultural in Tasmania is essential to maintain our state’s natural beauty, diversity and resources.”

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Shaky start to teaching career

Life as a teacher is bound to be full of surprises but nothing could prepare a new graduate for the catastrophic event that shook the classroom of UTAS Education graduate Joel Reeves on 19 April this year.

Joel graduated in December 2009 from the Cradle Coast campus and moved to Boulder in Western Australia to take up a position at the 120-year-old Boulder Primary School. His life as a teacher was going smoothly until a magnitude five earthquake rocked the region. Joel tells the story…

The earthquake happened at 8.17am on the first day back of Term Two. I was in the class writing up the lesson outcomes on the whiteboard. I wasn’t given any warning signs; I remember an enormous bang, like a clap of thunder right in my classroom.

The first thing that went through my mind was that a freak storm had hit. That thought lasted for about one second until I saw the books falling out of the bookshelf and the floor pulsating like food in a blender.

My first instinct was to run for the door-frame. As I was running there my classroom was completely covered in red dust and I could barely see. From under the door-frame I watched and heard the roof crackle and fall down. The quake lasted for about 15 seconds, but it happened in slow motion.

Thankfully the school doors don’t open until 8:30 so there were no children in the classroom, or it would have been chaos. There was an announcement over the PA for an evacuation procedure, so we all met outside. Then there was another aftershock which made the bitumen look like a wave of water.

The students were pretty freaked out but the staff and students all worked well as a team to make it safely to the oval where the teachers phoned parents to come and collect their students.

The community has been great, with one of the restaurants damaged in the quake cooking pizzas for the whole school and the local paper donating fruit boxes for the students. It was really great to see the community come together.

Fun in the deep end in Singapore

BT Merian Ellis

Earlier this year Bachelor of Education graduate Naomi Stewart was living with her parents in Devonport, applying for teaching jobs. A week later she was moving into a condo in Singapore, preparing to teach at an international school.

“I thought that for my first year or two of teaching that I’d probably just move to Victoria to teach because it was still close to home and I could come back if I wanted. I’d already applied for a few jobs in Victoria without success, and then I came across this teaching position in Singapore,” Naomi said.

“My family had been there on holiday a couple of years before and I loved it — but I didn’t think I’d have a chance of getting a job at a leading international school because similar positions I’d seen wanted applicants to have at least two or three years’ teaching experience.”

Naomi’s bravado paid off and within a week she had been interviewed and offered the job at the Rosemount Kindergarten, an Australian-run private international school in Singapore. “I all happened so quickly, and I didn’t really have much time at all to think about what I was doing but I’m so glad that I decided to do it.”

Naomi lives in a shared apartment on the east coast of Singapore close to her school.

“The condo has swimming pools and tennis courts. I am on the eighth floor but that is only a quarter of the way up! My flatmates are Indian and they are also in their early twenties.”

Apart from loving the lifestyle, food and new friends, Naomi is delighted with her job.

“The school is small but that’s a good thing because class sizes are small and I’ve got to know the other staff well, I have a class of three and four-year-olds and a full-time assistant in my classroom.

‘The school is small but that’s a good thing because class sizes are small and I’ve got to know the other staff well. I have a class of three and four year-olds and a full-time assistant in my classroom.

‘The first thing that went through my mind was that a freak storm had hit. That thought lasted for about one second until I saw the books falling out of the bookshelf and the floor pulsating like food in a blender.’

Because of structural damage to three of the classrooms (including mine), which required engineers to come in, school was closed for two days. This was good as I had to move classroom, buy all new stationery for the kids and set up my class in the LOTE [Languages other than English] room.

There was no warning of the initial 5.0 earthquake but we were warned that there’d be aftershocks for a couple of weeks. We’re still getting earthquakes and, since the original one, there have been about 10 earthquakes and probably 15 aftershocks.

Teaching has been okay since then, but initially the kids were unsettled and every noise made them jump and on edge.

The community has been great, with one of the restaurants damaged in the quake cooking pizzas for the whole school and the local paper donating fruit boxes for the students. It was really great to see the community come together.
The good news on chick peas

BY MICHELLE NICHOLS

Confess: when was the last time you ate a chickpea? Can’t remember? You’re not alone.

New research by the University of Tasmania has found they can help lower blood cholesterol and improve insulin resistance. The legumes are also satisfying and may help in weight control.

But most Tasmanians, and Australians in general, are not aware of the benefits and choose only to eat chickpeas in the form of hummus.

Jane Pittaway, a UTAS lecturer in health and biomedical science in the School of Human Life Sciences, carried out several studies on chickpeas over three years, advertising in the local media for participants aged between 30 and 70.

“We preferred people not in the pink of health: less fit, weighing more and with higher blood cholesterol and blood glucose than recommended for their age and gender,” she said.

“Overall, awareness about legumes was high among my participants; we’ve found people who already have an interest in their health and healthy eating tend to be the people volunteering.

“Even so, most participants knew chickpeas only as hummus; a few used them in curries or stews.”

Simplot Australia donated more than 2000 canned chickpeas during the study, which was carried out at facilities at the Clifford Craig Medical Research Trust.

“The first was a controlled dietary study where we compared the effects of two diets high in dietary fibre on cholesterol, blood glucose and insulin levels, perceived bowel health, bowel function and the degree of fullness that leads to finishing a meal,” Jane said.

“In one diet, fibre was supplied by chickpeas in the form of canned chickpeas, bread and biscuits containing chickpea flour.”

The participants completed each of the five-week dietary fibre periods in random order. The results showed while they consumed the same amount of dietary fibre during the two diets, the amount of polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA) was greater during the chickpea diet and there was a small reduction in total cholesterol after the chickpea diet compared to the wheat diet.

“The second study was an observational study where participants incorporated a minimum of four 300g cans of chickpeas per week into their diet for 12 weeks.

“This study found participants consumed less total fat overall during the chickpea phase compared to their usual diet and the fat they consumed contained more PUFA and less saturated fat.”

The forum’s intent was to discuss best governance and whether the Tasmanian Parliament should be extended to 35 members, reduced or stay the same.

Head of School, Professor Kate Crowley, who was one of the guest speakers at the forum, said the feeling in the room from most speakers and participants was that the sooner the House of Assembly is restored to 35, the better.

The sooner the House of Assembly is restored to 35, the better

UTAS School of Government students experienced a public policy debate up close and personal when they were participants in an ABC Mornings radio forum convened by broadcaster Tim Cot at Parliament House recently.

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Head of School, Professor Kate Crowley, who was one of the guest speakers at the forum, said the feeling in the room from most
Trialing different oils to feed farmed barramundi: Australian Maritime College PhD student Ramez Alhazzaz in the lab.

BY PATRICK CRANNY

An Australian Maritime College student has found that barramundi fed on the oil from an Australian grass seed have a higher omega-3 level than those fed on fish oil.

PhD student Ramez Alhazzaz, of the AMC’s National Centre for Marine Conservation and Resource Sustainability, has been recognised by a grant from the Fisheries Society of the British Isles for his work on the viability of fish oil alternatives in fish feeds.

Barramundi are usually fed on diets blended with fish oil to attain good growth and flesh quality. Ramez, the first to do this work with barramundi, will investigate the physiological, biochemical and molecular changes in barramundi fed on different oils instead of fish oil.

The project aims to maintain quality and omega-3 fatty acids levels in farmed fish in the face of pressure on wild fisheries to obtain the fish oil, currently a common and major source of feed ingredient for farmed fish.

“We’re using plant oils to replace fish oil in the diet while maintaining the level of omega-3 in the fish. If we don’t do that it’s compromising the final product, providing consumers with low-quality fish,” Ramez said.

To that end he’s been working on developing feed using oil from the seeds of a grass known as Patterson’s Curse.

“There are seeds of a grass found across Australia called Patterson’s Curse, or Salvation Jane in South Australia, are rich in oil which is a good source of omega-3 fatty acids. They are not the same as the ones found in fish but we think they could push the fish to make the more beneficial sort of omega-3 so we are feeding the fish precursors for these compounds.

“We’ve had good results so far but the only problem is the oil is very expensive to produce compared with canola oil or other mass-produced oil,” Ramez said.

“But we’ve proven the fish fed an oil from Patterson’s Curse have higher omega-3 levels than fish fed on fish oil.”

The Patterson’s Curse research forms just part of Ramez’s work, with feed research on barramundi in different temperatures and water salinity levels also in the mix.

Originally from Syria, Ramez started his research investigating endemic fish of Mesopotamia, then spent time in Taiwan before starting his PhD with the then School of Aquaculture, now part of AMC’s National Centre for Marine Conservation and Resource Sustainability.

Using Tasmanian timbers for violins

My interest in stringed instruments goes back to my childhood in the Canary Islands. I learned to play violin and viola, then studied at the Las Palmas Conservatorium and played for the Orchestra Filarmónico de Gran Canaria.

I decided to become a luthier and learn how stringed instruments are made and repaired, so I moved to Italy and studied at the Antonio Stradivari International Institute in Cremona. I have been making and restoring bowed string instruments using traditional timbers since 1991.

Moving to Tasmania I discovered that when using traditional instrument-making techniques for the creation of bowed string instruments, Tasmanian woods match the important tonal qualities of European woods.

My PhD title is Study of the mechanical and acoustic properties of Tasmanian timbers for their use in violin making.

The research aims to recognise the potential benefits of using Tasmanian woods for violin-making by determining the acoustical and mechanical properties of likely species, establishing a range of gradings for each one of the species selected for study, and looking into designing violin top and back plates to give them wanted acoustical/vibrational properties.

King Billy and blackwood timbers have been used successfully for many years to make instruments but we are putting some science behind a luthier’s assumptions about the timbers.

Forestry Tasmania donated 31 slabs of wood which I took to the CSIR in Melbourne. From these I cut 175 samples and they were tested by a machine that sent sound through them to determine their acoustical characteristics. The idea was to determine which areas of the slabs would be best to actually make the instrument.

I will make a violin with traditional European timbers and another with the best of Tasmanian timbers and then one of my supervisors, Edwin Paling, Head of Strings at the UTAS Conservatorium of Music, will have both instruments played by an accomplished violinist to make a comparison of their sound quality.
The work

The Oxford English Dictionary online defines 'middle ground' as a metaphorical place or position halfway between extremes. Award-winning Tasmanian artist David Keeling uses his paintings of the same title to highlight the juxtaposition of man-made objects in the natural environment.

Middle Ground depicts a scene where the ground is covered with bits of bone, sticks, bricks, rocks, and fragments of classical statues. It was crafted in 1986, at a time when the artist was juggling teaching with his art. "I was teaching at Glenora District High School at Bushy Park," David says. "Several teachers cobbled the journey from Hobart and on the days I didn’t drive, I stared out the window. This was the first time I really put myself into the landscape."

No ordinary Tasmanian terrain

They ate steak sandwiches and smelt the liniment — but Aussie Rules football still puzzles 14 international UTAS students.

The northern students spent a Saturday afternoon at a country football match recently to learn about their adopted country.

Shan White from UTAS’ Launceston Engagement and Development Office organised the trip to Longford for 14 students from Korea, China, Germany, Portugal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Uruguay, with the help of the Community Friends and Network Program.

"Most of them live on the campus and we wanted to give them a local experience," she said.

"The afternoon was a win-win all around," White said. "The Longford Football Club provided the students with a bus and lunch. The coach even gave them a tour of the change-rooms."

Chinese students Jiajia Zhong and Liusa Han were among six students helping out in the canteen, cooking flat-out for three hours. A Portuguese student wanted to be on the field and sat with the trainer for the whole seniors game.

Longford coach Paul Reynolds said the students experienced a significant aspect of Australian culture and mingled in a sporting club environment. "The afternoon was a win-win all round," he said.

"Some enjoyed the interaction in the canteen, others helped us with stars gathering," White said.

"It was enlightening for me — although I think they thought we were quite mad!"

A Korean nursing student Jooyung Oh wrote to organisers thanking them: "Although I have been staying in Australia for two years I have hardly had the chance to be involved in local communities. I think most international students feel the same."

Launceston Engagement and Development Manager Jo Archer said it was important to UTAS and the community to ensure out-of-town students enjoyed their time in Launceston and accessed local experiences and people.

A taste of Aussie life

Tasmanian terrain

David Keeling (b.1951) was born in Launceston, Tasmania and attended the Swinburne Film and Television School in Victoria in 1970, the Tasmanian School of Art in 1973 and the Alexander Mackie School of Art, Sydney in 1981. He has held solo and group exhibitions locally, nationally and internationally. He is the 2006 winner of the Glover Prize, Tasmania, the 1999 winner of the John Leslie Art Prize, and 1991 winner of the Hobart City Art Prize. David lives and works in Hobart.

Up there Cazaly! UTAS international students watch the footy game at Longford.

What’s on


WORKSHOP 10 JUNE, 24 JUNE Visual and Performing Arts Workshop River Theatre Lab public training sessions When: 6–7pm Where: Academy of the Arts, Inveresk, Room 18.1A.181. Entry: $3 Information: Robert Lewis, 0414329342

CONFERENCE 18 JUNE IT/Lab Conference TEDxTasmania TEDxTasmania is a series of worldwide events bringing together leading thinkers and doers to share ideas in any discipline. Five live and several video TEDx talks delivered at the TEDxTasmania conference will be made available to watch for free on the TEDxTasmania website after the conference. Venue: Annie Theatre; Academy of the Arts, Inveresk Information: Aaron Quigley, (03) 6324 3977 or http://www.tedxtasmania.org

21 JUNE – 22 JUNE School of English, Journalism and European Languages Conference Antarctic Visions: Cultural Perspectives on the Southern Continent Keynote speaker: Max Jones, Manchester University, on the Scott expedition Information: (03) 6218 2147 or SEELAdmin@utas.edu.au

23 JUNE – 25 JUNE Centre for Colonialism and its Aftermath Conference Ottoman Passages Focusing on new approaches to the analysis of imperial voyaging, keynote speaker: Rod Edmond, University of Kent Information: Rebecca Dorgan, (03) 6226 2347 or ccan@utas.edu.au

5 JULY – 08 JULY School of Mathematics and Physics Conference Astronomical Society of Australia annual science meeting Information: Simon Ellingham, (03) 6246 5285 or simon.allingham@utas.edu.au

22 JUNE UTAS Alumni Gathering drinks and networking with the Launceston Unitas Committee Enjoy the latest New Gallery exhibition and learn about the latest initiatives by UTAS to refresh its Alumni program. When: 5.30–7.30pm Where: New Gallery, UTAS Newnham campus, Launceston Information: Melanie Roome (03) 6324 3472

7 JULY Alumni and Development UTAS Alumni Gathering World Society Event Shanghai, China When: 6–8pm Where: Shanghai Shangai Hyland, 505 Nanjing Rd East, Shanghai Information: Melanie Roome (03) 6324 3472

LECTURE 15 JUNE The Royal Society of Tasmania Mid-Winter Lecture Series 2010 From Tasmania to Antarctica — Macquarie Island on the World Stage Chair: Sir Guy Green Speakers: Dr Garry Davison, School of Earth Sciences; Dr Roger Kallaway, School of Geography and Environmental Studies; Dr Iris Holl, Australian Antarctic Division. When: 8pm Where: Burbury Theatre Information: Pat Quality, pquality@utas.edu.au

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