They have difficulty chewing, swallowing and speaking, and often develop ulcers on the tongue and cheeks, have a burning throat and altered taste sensation.

SS is a chronic condition caused by the body’s immune system destroying exocrine glands, the secretion-producing structures of the body. Until this discovery, it was not known what caused this disease.

Professor Mariapia Degli-Esposti and her team have published research that shows SS can be caused by infection with a common virus, cytomegalovirus (CMV), which infects up to 60 per cent of people in the developed world.

Most people don’t know they have CMV. In healthy people it rarely causes symptoms and if it does they generally are mild flu-like, and may include fatigue, fever and muscle aches. Once you are infected with CMV, the virus remains with you for life, but it is dormant if you’re healthy. Although normally innocuous, given the right genetic background, chronic viral infection with CMV can trigger autoimmunity.

Professor Degli-Esposti is Director of Research at the Lions Eye Institute and Head of the division of Experimental Immunology at UWA’s Centre for Ophthalmology and Visual Science.
Common virus leads to serious disease continued from page 1

The Centre’s work with eyes led to the breakthrough in SS which revealed the link between chronic viral infection and autoimmune disease development.

“This is a significant discovery … we now know more about the pathways that lead to this common disease,” she said.

SS is most commonly suffered by women in the 40 to 60-year age group. Being a chronic condition, it often leads to depression and fatigue and the limited treatments available barely deal with the symptoms, but there are no effective treatments nor a cure.

The research was done in its entirety at the Lions Eye Institute by Dr Iona Schuster as part of her PhD studies at UWA, in close collaboration with Dr Matthew Wikstrom, a Lions Eye Institute Brian King Postdoctoral Research Fellow and led by Professor Degli-Esposti and Dr Chris Andoniou from UWA and LEI.

“It was an amazing lot of work, but the outcomes have made it all worthwhile,” Professor Degli-Esposti said.

“Now that we have been able to identify the exact cellular and molecular mechanisms that lead to the development of SS, we know the pathways that we can target to develop improved treatments for this common and debilitating condition,” Professor Degli-Esposti said.

“Up until now, research in this area had been speculative, and animal models suitable for the work were extremely limited.

“These findings offer hope for better targeted therapeutic treatments in the future.”

Paul Gandossi was not much higher than the tomato plants in his grandparents’ Osborne Park market garden when he started helping with the harvest.

That early experience developed into a love of plants which brought him to UWA and a TAFE course in horticulture. Now Paul is taking three months’ leave without pay from his position as a horticulture assistant in Grounds (Campus Management) to work at Kew Gardens, having won a highly competitive internship.

“I travelled overseas last year and visited Kew Gardens and I was bowled over by the variety of plants and the knowledge of the people who work there. I just wanted to get back there and learn more, and Jamie (Coopes, Horticulture Supervisor) and Dave (Jamieson, Grounds Manager) have been so supportive in helping me do it,” Paul said.

Kew Gardens takes just 10 interns each season from around the world and although Paul would have liked to be there in spring, he’s happy to be going in January next year.

“I’ve never seen snow before, so I’m looking forward to that,” he said. “And there’ll be plenty to do and learn in the greenhouses.”

Paul said he loved learning about plant anatomy and never ceased to be amazed at how a tiny seed could grow into a massive tree.

“The staff at Kew Gardens will also be learning from Paul,” said Jamie. “He’s a great young man who works hard.”

Paul’s favourite gardens on the Crawley campus are the taxonomic garden, which, with the help of Friends of the Grounds, he is currently revamping (“for its amazing diversity of plants”) and the rose gardens in Whitfeld Court.

“I love pruning the roses to bare sticks, then seeing, after just a couple of months, the most beautiful flowers emerge,” he said.
Students thrash out a peace deal for Korea

North and South Korea brokered a peace treaty with their neighbours and allies – in a room in the Arts faculty at UWA.

The simulated ‘peace congress’ was conducted with South Korea represented by students and an academic from Seoul National University (SNU) via a video link.

Third year Korean Studies students, led by Associate Professor Jo Elfving-Hwang, represented the political stakeholders: North Korea, China, Russia, Japan and the US.

“This special session was a culmination of our semester studying contemporary Korean society,” said A/Professor Elfving-Hwang, who has collaborated with Associate Professor Kim Tae-Gyoon from the Graduate School of International Studies at SNU.

The unit has been a combination of more traditional workshops at UWA, lectures delivered by a live-video link from SNU with problem-based workshops facilitated by A/Professor Elfving-Hwang with input from Professor Kim in Seoul, and student-based discussion seminars with the group from SNU. The simulated peace congress was conducted in English, as were the other sessions.

“Although many of our students are also learning the language, this unit is about understanding Korean people and society, as effective cross-cultural communications requires more than just linguistic competence. And what better way to do that than looking into Korea in real time, with the SNU students on the screen,” A/Professor Elfving-Hwang said.

“This simulation was about giving the students a chance to experience, in small scale, how complicated it would be to even begin to discuss the reunification of the Korean peninsula with so many different political ideologies, security concerns and historical legacies to contend with. The congress scenario was set in Perth in 2020 by which time we presumed, very optimistically I must add, that the necessity for peace between North and South Korea had been agreed.

“The students, in teams representing all the six parties involved in the real life Six Party Talks (South Korea, North Korea, US, Japan, China and Russia), had just 45 minutes to discuss their concerns and come to an agreement over the future of North Korea’s (assumed) nuclear weapons, the presence of the US military forces in South Korea, and other concerns, such as strategic alliances and economic interests.”

Their bargaining centred initially on the future of North Korean nuclear warheads, which for the purposes of this exercise were presumed to exist. At first, North Korea wanted to keep their weapons and share them with South Korea. Russia supported this, but Japan agreed with the US that the warheads should be destroyed.

The US and South Korea were concerned about the withdrawal of the US troops, citing equal security concerns and proposed a gradual withdrawal. North Korea responded by demanding complete withdrawal before agreeing to anything and eventually the talks on security ground to a halt.

“The discussion on who will fund the reconstruction of North Korea was very lively, and as each country offered tied loans and competed to gain various rights to invest in the peninsula, the students gained a glimpse into the various aspects that are at stake in this complicated geopolitical region with so many competing and conflicting issues at stake ...”

The teams of three or four students worked out and represented each country’s demands with regards to peace and security, international relations, trade relations, human rights issues and territorial issues, and although the teams managed to agree on some of the issues, unsurprisingly the most pressing ones relating to security and development aid to the North remained largely unresolved.

Students in both Seoul and Perth said how much fun the exercise had been, and our students were particularly happy about having had the chance to interact with students, real time, in Korea.
Impressive achievements for 2014

December is a time for review and consolidation as we reflect on what has been a critical and busy year here at the University.

As we continue to move forward with building UWA’s reputation as a centre for international excellence our efforts and focus will continue to intensify.

What I experienced this year was a whole-hearted effort by so many staff to take on new challenges, to reach new goals and to accomplish things that may have been new to them.

The Functional Review has been a constant thread this year, drawing us inward to assess and understand what we do and how we may do it better.

The Office of Operational Excellence (OOE) assembled some of the best professional staff from around the University who were all keen to play a part in improving what is already one of Australia’s leading institutions.

I thank those staff who have worked tirelessly in the OOE and close to 900 other staff who joined in enthusiastically to complete stage 2A of the review.

There has also been a considerable amount of work done to attract the brightest minds to our University. We have opened our doors to the wider community in an unprecedented style. Following another popular Open Day earlier this semester, we ran the inaugural Postgrad Week: a week of activities to entice our students, our staff, students from other universities, and members of the public to consider the benefits of postgraduate study. The Postgrad Expo, the culmination of the events, was the most successful we have ever run.

Research Week was another first, with the launch of a creative initiative to involve the community in what we do: Crowd Research.

The first five Crowd Research projects are featured in the pages of this issue. Some are designed for members of the public to help fund; there are some in which people can actively take part; and others for citizens to offer themselves for tests which will benefit their health.

It is an inspiring way for the entire community to be involved and to support their University.

We are already feeling that support, as UWA’s New Century Campaign reaches its first anniversary, with an extraordinary $218 million already raised – more than half of the $400 million target.

Of course, 2015 will present some new and interesting challenges that we will all have to manage. The schools’ half-cohort will be moving to tertiary education and with this comes a significant decrease to undergraduate numbers for all WA Universities. At a federal level, government funding to Universities remains unclear as parliament continues to debate legislation that will bring much needed reform to the sector.

So it is with a great sense of achievement that we start to think about summer holidays. I thank you all for your efforts this year and wish you and your families a happy and peaceful festive season.

Paul Johnson
Vice-Chancellor

Science and language take us to the top

Two young graduates are among Australia’s highest achievers.

Professor Ryan Lister has been named the Prime Minister’s Life Scientist of the Year and Amy Steinepreis has won WA’s 2014 Rhodes Scholarship.

Ryan Lister studied at UWA, then returned from postdoctoral work overseas to join the ARC Centre of Excellence in Plant Energy Biology.

His work in epigenetics and genomes has the potential to improve our understanding of the human brain; to transform stem-cell medicine; and to revolutionise agriculture.

The epigenome is a molecular code that controls how genes are turned on and off. Professor Lister pioneered new techniques which can quickly produce whole-genome maps of plants and animals.

In the human brain, a new form of the epigenome may play a critical role in learning, memory and neurological disorders. Professor Lister’s discovery that cells retain an epigenetic memory has clarified a challenge in stem-cell medicine.

And in agriculture, he hopes to develop crops that provide better yields of food, fuel and fibre in changing environments.

The arts, and languages in particular, have won Amy Steinepreis many prizes during her undergraduate years, capped by the Rhodes Scholarship, with which she will study Masters degrees in Modern Languages and International Relations at Oxford University from next year.

She gained First Class Honours in English, French and Italian and also has a working grasp of Russian, Spanish and Latin.

Amy hopes to become an international diplomat, working for a global organisation such as UNESCO.

“Ultimately, I would like to work in national arts and culture leadership in Australia,” she said, after being awarded UWA’s 100th Rhodes Scholarship in 101 years.
Chris Massey dreams of the day when UWA will be able to offer enrolment in a course and accommodation in a student residence as a ‘package deal’.

Mr Massey, Director of UWA Student Residences, has recently returned from a six month professional exchange with the University of Aberdeen.

“They guarantee all new students will get a bed and they have 3,500 students living in what amounts to a small suburb, Hillhead, which is a 15-minute walk from the campus,” Mr Massey said.

When St Thomas More College completes its extensions, UWA colleges will have accommodation for just over 2,000 students, with about another 400, mostly graduate students, in University housing, known as Crawley Village.

“I like to think about how we could do this one day: offer accommodation as part of enrolment,” he said. “But Aberdeen has 16,000 students and although there are many older students in other accommodation which the university organises, it still means that many of them have to leave and find their own apartments or rooms after first year. I think we would have to be careful with how we can offer more first year accommodation without jeopardising the collegiality and culture of colleges.

But with about 25,000 students and a projected total of 30,000 at UWA, it’s hard to see how we could package accommodation as part of the University offer without building many more rooms.”

Mr Massey did a direct exchange with Jacqui Tuckwell, general manager of accommodation at Aberdeen. She came here and worked in his position for three months. The other three months he spent shadowing Aberdeen’s director of campus life, learning about their catering and retail services, chaplaincy, career services, sport and recreation, international centre and university admissions.

“It was very beneficial – and very different. Aberdeen accommodation is run very commercially, with a bus route through Hillhead and commercial retailers such as Baskin Robbins and Starbucks on campus. This is all controlled centrally by the university.”

He said the exchange confirmed how good UWA was and how lucky we were to have such a beautiful campus.

“I missed the residential student life, which is exactly the thing that Jacqui admired. She took back ideas for more community-style living.

“The UWA Colleges provide some of the best student accommodation and experiences in the world.

“If we could provide this quality and experience on a bigger scale so all students could have an opportunity at some stage to live on campus, it would be ideal.”

The National Rental Affordability Scheme has enabled the extensions to UWA’s student accommodation and may be the key to extending it even more.

“We know that residential students have higher levels of university engagement, generally achieve higher pass rates and have the advantage of all that a collegiate experience can offer. If we could provide this to a greater number of students it would assist us in providing the breadth of learning offered by New Courses,” Mr Massey said.

He and his family left Perth on 16 December last year, when it was 45°C, arriving in Aberdeen 32 hours later to 0°C.

“But it wasn’t just the weather that was different. This exchange has made me really appreciate what international students experience. Even though the language was the same, I had the support of my family, and I wasn’t an 18-year-old student, I still experienced cultural differences and logistical difficulties such as getting Internet connection, a bank account, and learning how the supermarkets worked!

“The International Centre and UWA generally does a great job with international students to ease their transition, but we can still do even better at prioritising what students need when they first arrive in a new country.”
The medical doctors who have graduated from UWA have been making a difference to our community for decades.

Now, the new Doctor of Medicine graduate degree hopes to deliver even better-qualified doctors with more practical experience and a philosophy of altruism.

The difference is Service Learning.

The Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences is putting in place an innovative scheme for medical students to work in the community and to be mentored by people with skills and experience in the service industry, to develop students as leaders and advocates who will further UWA's links with the community.

“Community-engaged scholarship is about getting involved in the community and using your intellect to make a difference,” said Denese Playford, Associate Professor in Undergraduate Medical Education and co-ordinator of Scholarly Activity for the MD.

A/Professor Playford is also a coordinator in the Rural Clinical School of Western Australia and she has seen hundreds of medical students thrive in the rural setting, their sense of community flourishing.

Service Learning takes this a step further, with students gaining course credit for stepping out of clinical environments and working in the not-for-profit sector across a spectrum of children’s services, drug and alcohol counselling services, mental health organisations, men’s health, women’s health, environmental health, disability services, and a wide range of services assisting people with medical conditions like asthma, cancer, diabetes, Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s.

The idea of Service Learning is for students to contribute their skills to real-life problems in the community, and so develop the scholarship of engagement, with benefits for the community, the University and the student.

“The medical degree at UWA is now a graduate course, so we are reaping the benefits of more mature, experienced students to start with,” A/Professor Playford said. “Adding the Service Learning component will coach these students in leadership, advocacy and applied scholarship.”

The faculty is looking for Service Learning portfolio mentors who understand how the service sector operates and can help the students with its benefits and pitfalls.

Portfolio mentors will be able to provide a supportive learning environment for students; to help develop their skills as service providers in the not-for-profit sector; and to encourage them to work through challenges in this new area of endeavour.

“It would be wonderful to get a lot of people from UWA offering their services as mentors, because there are so many people with rich experiences who could help students learn,” A/Professor Playford said. “There has been an incredible buy-in from the community, and great support at a high level of the University. The idea of students contributing back to the community just makes sense.”

But you don’t have to be an academic to put your hand up to be a mentor.

People with business experience in the not-for-profit sector will be valuable.

“Mentors who are not already academic staff at UWA will be recognised with a position as an Adjunct Clinical Lecturer in the faculty,” said A/Professor Playford, who will advise and coordinate the mentors.

She expects each mentor to have up to a few students each. They will need to be formally available twice a semester for portfolio discussion but more frequent informal contact is also expected.

Students will start their Service Learning in the second year of medical studies, with classroom teaching and a small amount of contact with their chosen organisation. They will have a say in which organisation they are assigned to, and contact with that organisation will ramp up over the next two years.

If you would like to volunteer to be a Service Learning portfolio mentor, starting in July 2015, please contact A/Professor Playford by email at denese.playford@uwa.edu.au
Ordinary people can become citizen scientists and historians with UWA’s first round of Crowd Research.

The Office of Research Enterprise (ORE) has identified five projects in this pilot phase which are achievable with the involvement of the community.

Crowd Research, launched at the University’s inaugural Research Week earlier this month, has the potential to boost the success of smaller-scale research projects while handing the community a unique opportunity to get involved.

Campbell Thomson, Director of ORE, said the research community was excited about both these expected outcomes.

“Three of the first five projects on offer through our Crowd Research website are simply asking members of the public to take part in testing, sampling and unearthing wartime stories. The other two are asking for donations to ocean science projects, both of which will offer the donors some ‘ownership’ of the projects: the ability to track their ‘own’ turtle hatchlings and whale sharks,” Dr Thomson said.

“When a project needs $30,000, my ideal would be 30,000 people each giving $1 because that gets the most people involved in our Crowd Research projects, and that’s what we hope to achieve,” he said.

Dr Michele Thums and Dr Mark Meekan, adjunct researchers at UWA and members of the UWA Oceans Institute, are both part of the whale shark and turtle hatchling projects. Along with environmental engineer, Professor Chari Pattiaratchi, they are planning to track turtle hatchlings on their very first journey from the beach at Ningaloo out across the reef to the safer environment of deep water.

The near-shore environment is a hostile one for the hatchlings, with predators abounding and only shallow water for protection. Dr Thums’ team knows that artificial light hampers the baby turtles’ ability to find the sea and they think that once they make it to the sea, lights might also continue to disorientate them. They want to track hatchlings at night to see just how lights on and near the water (for example, from ports and oil rigs) affect their survival.

The results could be used to advise industrial and residential developers on lights near turtle nesting beaches.

The public involvement is to fund the tiny tracking devices the team plans to attach to the turtles. Each device costs $400 and the donors can track their turtles as they make their first dangerous journey to the sea.

Dr Ana Sequeira, a post-doctoral research fellow from the UWA Oceans Institute and the Centre for Marine Futures is leading the whale shark project in collaboration with both Dr Thums and Dr Meekan. This project plans to track whale sharks in Australian waters to work out where they go afterwards and how they chose their migration patterns.

The tracking devices used on the whale sharks are satellite sensors, so are much more expensive than the turtles’ sensors. This team is asking for donations towards the cost of between $5,000 and $7,000 for each sensor system. Once again, donors will be able to track their whale sharks online, and help to discover where whale sharks go.

The Western Australian Eye Protection Study wants to help WA people to protect their eyes and are seeking participants who play sport to come in to the Lions Eye Institute (LEI), answer some questions about what sport they play, how long they are out in the sun and what protection (hats, sunglasses) they use.

The questionnaire will be linked to an eye examination and each participant will be given advice on appropriate eye protection. This project is led by Professor David Mackey and graduate student Lisa Booth from LEI.

The last two projects are MicroBlitz (which asks travellers to collect soil samples around the state) and the Kings Park/RSL/UWA project to discover and publish the stories behind the memorial plaques in Kings Park. These have been previously covered in UWAnews.

Go to crowdresearch.csp.uwa.edu.au to follow the projects and take part.

Become involved in research – without doing the study

You can track these turtle hatchlings

(Photo: Joan Costa)
Australia’s first commercial fast-charging station for electric cars is on the Crawley campus.

The Renewable Energy Vehicle (REV) Project, in the School of Electrical, Electronic and Computer Engineering, has installed the station near the University Club.

Professor Thomas Bräunl, REV project director, said the Combo-CCS (combined charging standard) station could charge an electric vehicle in just 30 minutes from empty to an 80 per cent charge level.

“This is about seven times faster than REV’s public charging stations in the Perth metro area and about 25 times faster than home-charging,” Professor Bräunl said.

The station can also charge vehicles with the Japanese CHAdeMO standard.

Professor Bräunl said the $30,000 station had been donated to REV, with $10,000 installation costs shared by the Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics and an Australian Research Council Linkage Project grant to support research on Electric Vehicle Charging Patterns.

“With 50kW of DC charge power, the charger location had to be carefully chosen because it requires sufficient power reserves from a nearby building,” Professor Bräunl said.

“Fast-charging stations will change the game for electric vehicles, as they separate parking from charging. During the ARC Linkage project study, charging stations were sometimes used more for parking than charging, but this will not happen at this fast-charging station, since usage is limited to 30 minutes after which the driver has to move the vehicle.”

Professor Bräunl said fast-charging stations could also make commercial charging networks profitable, because they attracted more customers each day and offered a premium charging service for owners.

He said figures from the State Department of Transport showed there were 110 electric vehicles in Perth. He expected up to 70 of them could come and use the fast-charging station on campus.

The REV team is currently investigating the differences in energy efficiency between slow home charging, medium-fast AC charging, and fast DC charging. The team also plans to investigate the effects of repeated fast-charging on battery life.

The new Combo-Charger is located in UWA’s car park no. 3 next to the University Club and is open for use by the general public. Power is free of charge and no parking fees apply.

Quick charge at the Club

Australia’s first commercial fast-charging station for electric cars is on the Crawley campus.

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Two famous writers who played delightfully with words – centuries apart – are honoured by the poetry revival group, Well Versed.

Next Sunday, 30 November, St George’s College will host a reading of Dylan Thomas’s beloved radio play, Under Milkwood.

The performance, at 2.30pm in the dining hall, marks the centenary of the birth of poet and playwright Thomas.

Under Milkwood chronicles a day in the life of the mythical Welsh fishing town of Llareggub.

The following weekend, Well Versed commemorates the 450th anniversary of the birth of Shakespeare with a selection of verse and excerpts from his plays at The Hollow amphitheatre, Allen Park, Swanbourne.

The program, Shakespeare’s Infinite Variety, begins at 3pm on Sunday 7 December. It is hosted by The Fellowship of Australian Writers WA branch (FAWWA).

As always, audiences can expect to be amused and delighted by the UWA-connected group’s performances.

Tickets for Under Milkwood are $10 and for Shakespeare $15 ($10 for FAWWA and Well Versed members). You can book by calling Jim or Alison Gregg on 9336 5949.

For any further inquiries, please contact Joan Pope at popejoan@westnet.com.au
Youth and longevity – along with biodiversity – were celebrated at an international symposium on vegetation science at UWA last month.

The 57th Annual Symposium of the International Association for Vegetation Science (IAVS) honoured Professor David Goodall, who turned 100 earlier in the year.

Professor Laco Mucina, the Iluka Chair in Plant Biology, organised the conference and praised Professor Goodall, an honorary member of the IAVS.

“The prestigious book series Ecosystems of the World, published by Elsevier, of which David was editor-in-chief, is an opus of unprecedented dimensions,” Professor Laco said.

He said the highlight of the symposium was the attendance of many young people, early career researchers, supported by the IAVS to come to remote Western Australia from all over the world.

“I introduced a new category of keynote speakers, Key Note – Young Perspectives. These talks were presented by young researchers on the ascending branches of their careers. They were asked to assess the future development of vegetation science.”

Professor Laco said this initiative was highly commended by the 270 scholars from 34 countries.

The week-long symposium was flanked by five-day field trips: before the symposium, 58 participants travelled north as far as Shark Bay and afterwards, 62 people went south, including the Stirling Range, the Warren region and Margaret River. There was also a trip to the wet tropics in Queensland for the overseas visitors.

The trips were designed for the scholars to get to know the flora, to discuss, in the field, the vegetation patterns and their origin, to discuss the ecology, geology and land use of the visited landscapes and to form networks between participants and local ecological experts.

Several one-day excursions mid-week to localities close to Perth broke up the five days of the conference.

Part of the symposium was devoted to interactions between the mining industry, the consulting industry and the science community to try to solve the problems of post-mining rehabilitation, especially in marginal challenging environments.

Iluka Resources Ltd, a mineral-sands mining company active in Western Australia, played an important role as principal sponsor of the symposium.

The conference spans diversity – of plants and people

Planting the seeds for healthy business growth

What conditions are needed to grow healthy Indigenous enterprises?

How are ideas, talent and leadership nurtured?

Where do government and the corporate sector fit in Indigenous-led economies?

These and many more questions will be answered at IBECC 14, the third biennial Indigenous Business Enterprise and Corporations Conference.

Initiated in 2010 by Professor Paul Flatau, Director of the Centre for Social Impact in the Business School, and still run by him and his team, the conference will be at the Business School on 1 and 2 December. It is co-hosted by the School of Indigenous Studies.

Business leaders, social entrepreneurs, Indigenous corporations, native title organisations, academics and government will all be represented, discussing the business of strong futures.

Key speakers include Professor Marcia Langton, an anthropologist from The University of Melbourne and a leading Indigenous scholar; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda; and Ben Wyatt, WA’s shadow minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Native title.

Professor Flatau expects rigorous and exciting dialogue on how to foster the health and growth of Indigenous businesses, enterprises and corporations.

“Seven streams will focus on different aspects from incubating start-ups to succession planning,” he said.

More than 500 presentations and workshops will be augmented by a program of Indigenous music, art and entertainment.

To learn more or book your place at the conference, call 6488 5691, email csi-conf-business@uwa.edu.au or visit business.uwa.edu.au/ibecconference
UWA’s reputation for undergraduate research was enhanced recently with 37 students taking part in the International Conference of Undergraduate Research (ICUR).

The concept of undergraduate research is embedded in New Courses and was championed at UWA by Professor Sally Sandover, Academic Director of Educational Strategies, and Dr Lee Partridge who created ULTRIS, the Undergraduate Learning and Teaching Research Internship. ULTRIS won a national award for university teaching in 2013.

The UWA cohort of presenters at ICUR included ULTRIS students (including two exchange students from the National University of Singapore), BPhil students, some Honours students, and a group of medical students.

Of these, some presented face-to-face and others presented their research to an audience of students and supervisors from six universities across four continents. The live presentations took place at the Harry Perkins Institute, with real-time video conferencing to include Monash, Warwick, Washington, Nanyang Technical and Singapore Management universities and Baruch College from The City University of New York.

“The differences in time zones is always a problem with video conferencing,” Professor Sandover said. “On the day of this conference, sessions started for us around 8am and finished after 9.30pm, with students in other countries joining in or dropping out at various times.”

The students’ topics were presented in interest groups, with up to three universities taking part – all the participants on screens – at a time, and all of them asking questions.

“It is a wonderful safe environment for students for their first major academic presentation, with the audience made up mainly of other undergraduates and their supervisors,” Professor Sandover said.

“It all worked brilliantly, thanks in no small part, to the 20 student volunteers from UWA who marketed the event, chaired the sessions and helped to organise registration and catering,” said Andrea Fraser, project officer in the Educational Strategies Office.

“But it is also through Sally’s (and Lee’s) hard work and great ideas that UWA is gaining a very high reputation nationally and internationally for undergraduate research,” she said.

Professor Sandover said there was widespread interest in undergraduate research. “But very few institutions have the structures in place to guide students from writing a proposal through to presenting their research at a conference.”

She said ULTRIS also aligned with UWA’s Educational Futures, providing opportunities for transformative learning.

“The students who take part all agree that undergraduate research is absolutely transformative,” she said.

Next year, ICUR will be run concurrently with ACUR, the Australasian Conference for Undergraduate Research, over two days. ACUR is open to all students across the globe.

Abstracts for both conferences are due to be submitted by May 2015.

Please contact Andrea Fraser (andrea.fraser@uwa.edu.au) for more information.
A recent study has found that children are just as capable as adults at recognising faces from different angles, adding to the evidence that face recognition ability is already established in young children. The discovery, by Dr Kate Crookes from Psychology and her collaborators, may have implications for people with cognitive disorders.

Recognising someone a split second after seeing his or her face is an almost effortless activity for most people. This complex ability to process faces is evident even in newborns, though in previous laboratory tests face recognition performance improved considerably across childhood.

Scientists have long disagreed on the reason for this gradual improvement.

One common argument is that as children age, they gradually start to process faces holistically, as adults do, instead of breaking faces into parts and processing each part individually.

Because this type of holistic processing would be necessary to extract the features of a face that don’t change when viewed from a side angle, this theory suggested young children would be worse at recognising faces in profile.

To test this theory, Dr Crookes and University of Western Sydney expert Dr Rachel Robbins asked 32 adults and 26 eight-year-olds to study a set of computer-generated, front-facing faces. The participants then picked out the same faces from pairs of front-facing faces and from pairs of faces in profile. The researchers found both groups were worse at picking out the previously learnt faces from those in profile than from those facing the front.

They determined there was no significant difference between the two groups in how much their performance dwindled in response to the change in viewpoint, contrary to the argument that children are more affected by viewing angle than adults.

Dr Crookes explained that factors such as poor concentration and memory might not have been controlled for in other studies.

“Children generally have poorer memory than adults, and we wanted to make sure this didn’t reduce their ability to show their level of face recognition,” she said.

“So we controlled for memory by making the task easier for the children, reducing the number of faces they had to learn at a time.

“The results support our previous findings that face recognition is mature in very young kids.

“If we can continue improving our understanding of how face recognition develops, it could help develop a method of intervention for people with disorders that hinder their ability to recognise faces.”

The research team hopes to expand upon this research by testing different age groups, including younger children and older adults.

It is currently recruiting typically developing children in Years 1 and 3 to participate in a three-year longitudinal study.

“In further research on face and expression recognition skills in children, we are trying to understand firstly, why some children are better than others and secondly, why all children seem to get better with age,” Dr Crookes said.

“We are investigating whether things like general cognitive ability, face-specific processing mechanisms and psychosocial factors, such as anxiety and shyness, might contribute to these differences.”

To ask about this research, please go to sites.google.com/site/scifaceuwa/

Children are good at recognising faces

**Familiar faces to young and old**

The University of Western Australia

**UWAnews** Number 10 | December 2014 | 11
Study of the Earth and its environment is probably the oldest discipline of all.

Neanderthal man didn’t call it geography, but he would have been making decisions about hunting and shelter based on geographical observations.

Yet the discipline of geography at UWA has such a relatively short history that all of its former Chairs are alive and well and will join current staff and students and alumni to celebrate a milestone this month.

The Department of Geography is just 50 years old.

On Friday November 28, the discipline that now makes up a sizeable portion of the School of Earth and Environment will celebrate the achievements of its graduates and staff alumni.

Before 1964, there was no Department of Geography. In the 1920s, elements of physical geography were being taught within the Department of Geology.

Joe Gentilli, recognised as the first geographer at UWA, arrived in Fremantle in 1939 having escaped Mussolini’s regime in Italy. After a brief period of internment in Fremantle Gaol as an ‘enemy alien’ he took up a position at the University in 1940, teaching both physical and human geography out of the Department of Economics.

Matthew Tonts, Head of Earth and Environment, said Professor Gentilli ran his ‘geographical laboratory’ through the 1950s and 1960s with a small band of staff including David Scott, Ken Tiller and Clarrie Makin – the foundations of an early department.

“There was a push, during the late 1950s, to establish a department and, in 1964, Martyn Webb arrived from Oxford to take the inaugural Chair in Geography,” Professor Tonts said.

“The new department was one of the best resourced in the country. Rumour has it new staff were shown their office and then given a telephone, a typewriter and an ashtray!”

The ashtrays were as ubiquitous in the department’s first decades as smartphones are now.
In September this year 12 Geography students, along with students from Bogor Agricultural University, spent a week on residential fieldwork in Bali as part of their second year studies.

The trip was supported by an award of $20,000 from the Commonwealth Government’s AsiaBound program. The group, led by Dr Julian Clifton and Dr Renae Hovey, looked at how tourism development has affected the socio-cultural and physical environment of Bali and how recent local ecotourism initiatives are attempting to provide a more sustainable model of tourism for the future.

Another group of students travelled to the Pacific North-west of the United States, looking at aspects of environmental change, regional development and urban planning.

“Geography students in future years will have regular opportunities for residential fieldwork overseas in an increasingly broad range of exciting destinations,” Dr Clifton said.

About 1,600 UWA Geography graduates are working in diverse fields, from international development and senior positions in local government to teaching in schools. They are exerting a significant influence on environmental issues, land rehabilitation, planning and policy.

“These are the people and the achievements we will be celebrating,” Professor Tonts said.

One of the School’s highest profile graduates is 2014 Young West Australian of the Year, Dr John Van Bockxmeer. He graduated from UWA with a double degree in Medicine and Geography and has seamlessly merged medicine and regional development.

While working in a hospital in the Pilbara, he established Fair Game, a charity that inspires change in Indigenous and migrant communities through fitness, capacity-building and health education programs. Fair Game runs its now Australia-wide programs with donated recycled sports equipment.

Dr Van Bockxmeer is the contemporary face of Geography, a discipline that is more than ‘just studying maps’.

“Today, it’s about the science of space and place,” Professor Tonts said.

Next year, UWA will offer the new Master of Geographic Information Systems and a Master of Development to continue its already important contributions to environmental science and urban planning.

But for now, all current and past staff and students are invited to the 50th celebration, where reflections on the past will vie with directions for the future as old meets new.

The event is on the evening of 28 November (from 7 – 10pm) on Whitfeld Court in front of Winthrop Hall. The cost is $80 ($50 current students). Please contact events-alumni@uwa.edu.au or call 6488 4268 for more information. Payment can be made online at http://payments.weboffice.uwa.edu.au/development/event_geography01.
With the passing of David Malcolm, the Law School has lost one of its foremost alumni, and the State a distinguished lawyer and Chief Justice.

David graduated from the Law School in 1959 with first class honours. He won a Rhodes Scholarship in 1960, and in 1962 completed the Oxford BCL, again with first class honours.

After some years as a partner of Muir Williams and Nicholson (subsequently Freehills), and as Deputy General Counsel for the Asian Development Bank in Manila, he went to the independent bar, becoming a QC in 1980.

In 1988 he was appointed Chief Justice of Western Australia. Unlike his immediate predecessors, he was appointed straight from the bar, rather than serving a period as a junior justice, but his appointment was universally popular and reflected his status as the acknowledged leader of the legal profession in Western Australia. He served 18 years as Chief Justice before retiring in 2006. He was appointed Lieutenant Governor in 1990 and made a Companion of the Order of Australia in 1992.

David was a visiting lecturer in the 1960s, but his most enduring contribution to the Law School came in the 1980s when he persuaded it to fill what he saw as a gap in the curriculum by creating a new unit in Equity. For a year or two he taught some of the new unit himself, and continued to make a contribution even after becoming Chief Justice. Equity remained a compulsory unit in the LLB and has been carried forward to the new JD degree as part of the unit Equity and Trusts.

David's influence was felt in many other ways: I particularly remember his role in solving the problem of five-year articled clerks who took classes at the Law School and had become technically entitled to a degree. (Five years in articles, once the standard method of entry to the legal profession, had become anachronism by the early 1980s, and was eventually abolished.) Over lunch with the Dean (Anthony Dickey) and the Sub-Dean (myself), David and Kevin Parker on behalf of the Barristers Board suggested how the regulations could be changed to solve the problem. David's service to the university and the legal profession was recognised by the award of an Honorary Doctor of Laws in 2008.

As Chief Justice, David saw it as part of his role to speak out and educate the public on issues relating to the law and the administration of justice, a tradition continued by the present Chief Justice, Wayne Martin. David also served the law in many other capacities, for example as Vice President of the Law Society from 1986 to 1988, and as a dominant figure in LawAsia for many years. He was a member of the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia between 1975 and 1982, and its Chairman for most of that period. Though he had left the Commission by the time I became its Director of Research in 1983, he maintained close links with the Commission, and provided wise counsel when the Commission was going through a troubled period during the late 1990s.

David's talents were not confined to the law. He represented UWA at rugby during his undergraduate years, and at Oxford he played for the Oxford Greyhounds and Wadham College. He captained WA in 1964 and 1965, and was captain of the Associates team which twice won the premiership. When new appointments brought the number of Supreme Court justices to 15, it seemed entirely appropriate.

Retirement from the Chief Justiceship did not mean retirement from the law. David was immediately appointed a Professor of Law at the University of Notre Dame, where he was an influential figure for a number of years. Sadly, illness curtailed his contribution and prevented him enjoying his retirement to the full. He will be remembered as a towering figure in the history of the legal profession in Western Australia.
Drummers, dogs and a whole new department – **DVC-Exterminators** – were the stars of the annual Staff Sports and Fun Day.

Brazilian drummers Beleza set the carnival theme, their big sounds summoning hundreds of staff from their offices and laboratories.

A new team in diesel and bright yellow represented the office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) with the scary name of **DVC-Exterminators**. They demolished all opposition in the quest for the most represented team, with 82 staff members taking part.

**Registrar Rules** rode again, despite the Registrar’s Office restructure. This team represented the new Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Community and Engagement) and the man himself, Kent Anderson, donned the hot pink T-shirt and took part in the volleyball. Watch out for new team livery next year.

The big winner of the day was one of the smallest teams, **Lawsome**, from the Law Faculty. Their purple capes really were awesome and won them the Best Dressed Team. The team also (allegedly) won the inaugural Treasure Hunt and, not surprisingly, lodged the most (unofficial) objections.

The Science Faculty won the popular Tug’o’War, with faculty sports co-ordinator Cindi Dunjey, sporting a bright green wig, and her daughter Evie, accepting the Len Zucks-designed trophy.

The Noongar game, *Fly*, was won by Philipp Kastner from the Law School and Annaleis Martin from University Hall. Jack Bao (DVC-E) and Kirrily Robson (Safety, Health and Wellbeing) won the VC’s Dash.

The Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics (ECM) carried off the trophy for the Dean’s Dash, although the results of this race are always a little dodgy, with so many mixed teams.

Mention must be made of Iain Watt and Grady Venville (DCV-E), the participants who were closest to actually being Deans.

A cheque for $546 was presented to Fair Game, along with a binful of recycled sporting equipment, donated by staff.

The event was organised by ECM, who will do it again next year. Thanks to the sponsors, the University Club, UniCredit and UniPrint, and to the staff of Sport and Recreation for their help.
As students finish their exams and some their degrees, the University community is already looking forward to a new intake of undergraduates.

Next year, the UWA Fogarty Foundation Scholarships – one of Australia’s premier scholarship programs – will be presented for the 12th time.

More than 100 of WA’s best and brightest students are studying here or have completed courses with support from the Foundation. For the past seven years, the Beazley medallist has accepted a Fogarty scholarship, and in 2012 and 2013, WA’s Rhodes Scholars were both UWA Fogarty scholars.

Founder and Chair of the Foundation, Annie Fogarty, who has a deep belief in the power of education, said that many of them will go on to be leaders in their fields in Australia and internationally.

Up to 14 students will receive scholarships early next year, with awards for up to four regional students (which include college accommodation) and 10 for city students.

Mrs Fogarty is impressed with many of the scholars’ development as leaders while they are still students.

Regional scholar Simon Thuijs from Geraldton, who is studying a Bachelor of Philosophy (Hons) majoring in Arts and Science, said the program had helped him improve his leadership skills.

“The Fogarty Conversations have enabled me to meet some incredible people like Sir Bob Geldof, Dr Fiona Wood and Dr Janet Holmes à Court,” Simon said.

“Since becoming a Fogarty Scholar, I’ve directed and produced a massive LipDub film for the UWA Centenary celebrations, organised a charity ball that raised $7,500 and volunteered at two schools in Cambodia during my Christmas holidays.

“It is an amazing feeling knowing that someone believes in you enough to fund your education and give you the best opportunity for future success,” he said.

Anish Badgeri is also a BPhil student, majoring in Political Science and International Relations and Economics, paired with a Diploma in Modern Languages (French).

She says the biggest benefit of being part of a cohort of Fogarty scholars is that just being around such an energetic and high achieving group of people forces you to be very active yourself.

“A lot of the inspiration I use to get things done comes from the amazing work of other scholars. It’s an amazing support base or network to encourage each other to keep giving to the community and doing the things we love doing.

“Eventually I hope to be able to use economic and political means to make social change. A lot of the changes I want to make in the world are about breaking down social barriers constructed around race, gender and sex.

“Currently, I am trying to do this by educating and exposing young people to these issues, with the hope that some of the future leaders of society will share the same ambitions. Studying at UWA with a Fogarty Scholarship has connected me to people that can help realise my dreams. I’ve been able to get involved with organisations such as UN Youth which give me the platform and capacity to pursue things that are in line with my passions.”

The UWA Fogarty Foundation Scholarships will be announced in March next year.
Don’t take your safety for granted

Professor Tim Ackland, acting chair of the University Safety Committee, praised Professor Dunlop and her staff for their active laboratory inspection program, as one of the many reasons they won the award.

Alex Scholz, the safety officer in Facilities Operations won the Individual Safety Award for his work in Campus Management including the development of an asbestos management policy and plan. This has led to asbestos removal, updating of the asbestos register and comprehensive asbestos awareness training for maintenance staff.

Professor Ackland said Alex had shown leadership and dedication in implementing work health and safety improvements.

The winner of the Safety Leadership Award is Geraldine Pieterse for outstanding leadership and initiative in health and safety practices in the Rural Clinical School of WA. Geraldine is based in the Kalgoorlie headquarters but she has developed manuals and standard operating procedures for all 14 rural sites across the state.

The Safety Recognition Award was shared by Greg Cawthray in Plant Biology and Lorraine Wilson in Earth and Environment. Greg’s contributions included laboratory and chemical safety programs, fieldwork and driver safety and emergency preparedness. Lorraine was commended for safety programs in the school’s wide range of field work.

Sarah Dunlop received her School’s award from Dawn Freshwater and Tim Ackland

It was a timely award for the School of Animal Biology when they took off the UWA Group Safety Award for 2014.

Head of School Professor Sarah Dunlop accepted the award and told the gathering in the Vice-Chancellery about how close her staff had come to what could have been a serious incident, following the discovery of a potentially explosive chemical in their school two weeks earlier.

Professor Dunlop had already instituted an audit of chemicals and reagents in the school and this scare has encouraged further precautions.

Women leading the way for 20 years

About 160 women, a handful of men, two dogs and a three-month-old baby recently celebrated 20 years of Australia’s top women’s leadership program.

UWA’s Leadership Development for Women program began while Fay Gale was Vice-Chancellor, to redress the gender imbalance among academic staff.

The program blossomed to include professional women as well as academics, and, at the celebration, there were countless stories of success, enduring friendships, life-changing realisations and decisions and achievements, big and small.

“Leading the Way, edited by LDW’s Claire Webb and Lucienne Tessens, was launched by Vice-Chancellor’s Fellow Liz Constable.

“This is a great read. I started reading the stories of the women who had participated in LDW and I couldn’t put it down,” Mrs Constable told the gathering at the University Club.

“I was an academic in the Education faculty in my earlier days and I keep thinking, what if LDW had been around in the 1970s? How different might my life have been? Maybe I wouldn’t have gone into politics...”

Mentors play an important role in the program and two of them, Dr Sato Juniper and Emeritus Professor Lyn Abbott, were honoured with the Joan Eveline Award for Mentoring. They have each mentored 11 women in the program.

“IT is so sweet for us to receive this award together,” Dr Juniper said. “Lyn has been a wonderful mentor for me for many years.”

At the end of each program, participating groups present, in a creative way, what they have learned. One of the most creative recent presentations was by a 2013 group calling themselves the LDW Rappers, and they performed their song to a very appreciative audience.
The homeless population of Crawley jumped one night last month when nearly 50 staff and students and their families and friends slept out on the Great Court.

The inaugural Student Services Sleepout for Anti-Poverty Week raised nearly $6,000 for RUAH, a charity in Northbridge that offers services to homeless people.

The temporarily homeless had the advantage of a simple evening meal and some cereal for breakfast, but they came away from the event with at least a rudimentary appreciation for sleeping rough.

The Campus Sleepout broke social media records with more than 15,500 views on the UWA Students’ Facebook page.

Staff in Student Services are already planning next year’s event, and are hoping for even more participants.

Corey and Anais are brother and sister and have a younger brother, 13 year-old Declan, who will probably be a vet like their dad, Peter. Peter graduated from Murdoch University and works in the south-west where the siblings grew up. Anais lives at St Catherine’s College and Corey is renting nearby.

James and Lachlan are brothers, the sons of Michael, who graduated from UWA with a degree in mechanical engineering.

Mitchell and Luke are brothers, the sons of John, who graduated from UWA with a physics degree.

The cousins’ grandmother, Margaret Rosher, is in her eighties and they regularly have dinner with her. “She’s lovely,” they all said in unison. Their grandfather was a second generation farmer, who had owned farm property in both Lockridge and Bullsbrook. His parents migrated to WA from England after World War I.

The cousins grew up together, with the Perth-based families visiting the south-west family often. They enjoyed clay fights, picnics, zooming around on quad bikes and can laugh now about Corey getting a chipped tooth when he did a long jump across the trampoline.

“We all wanted to come to UWA because it’s the best university in Western Australia,” Mitchell said.

“And it’s fun for us all to be here together,” Anais said.

All in the family

By Sally-Ann Jones

The idea was to get all six Rosher cousins in one place at one time: a big ask for a busy bunch of young adults.

But it was surprisingly straightforward – and easy for anyone seeing them together to know they were all part of the same family, and that they share a strong bond.

All six turned up punctually, coming from different parts of the campus, suggesting that promptness is a family trait as well.

Corey (23), Mitchell (22), James (21), Anais (19), Luke (19) and Lachlan (18) Rosher are perhaps the biggest group of first cousins at UWA. Two of their three fathers (all brothers) are UWA graduates too.

Corey has completed a bachelor of science (majoring in pharmacology) and is now studying a bachelor of commerce, hoping to get into medicine; Mitchell has just completed a bachelor of civil engineering; James is currently studying mechatronic engineering; Luke is studying commerce (majoring in accounting and business law); Anais – the only girl of her generation on the Rosher side of the family – is currently studying pharmacology (will be studying medicine postgraduate); and Lachlan is studying electrical engineering.

A cold night on campus

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“We all wanted to come to UWA because it’s the best university in Western Australia,” Mitchell said.

“And it’s fun for us all to be here together,” Anais said.
The Faculty of Education is celebrating an exceptional partnership with a prestigious school in Singapore.

This year marks the 14th anniversary of a program between the Faculty and the Hwa Chong Institution (HCI) in Singapore.

In 2000 the Institution, then called Chinese High School, embarked on a program to upgrade its teachers’ research capabilities while earning a UWA Master of Education degree. Since the first cohort of 20 Masters students began their UWA studies, 11 cohorts have completed the MEd program, and a total of 159 HCI staff have graduated with a UWA Master of Education.

Speaking to the Straits Times in Singapore, one HCI teacher said the role of teachers was changing globally: “Content mastery is no longer enough. We need teachers to be effective research mentors.”

It comes as no surprise, then, that as more and more teachers gained Masters degrees, highly motivated research leaders would want to pursue doctoral studies. The first cohort of 15 HCI teachers enrolled in the UWA Doctorate of Education (EdD) in 2004 – to date 28 teachers have graduated from this partnership program in Singapore.

“In all respects, the degree programs involved are the same as those provided in Perth,” said Professor Keith Punch, who has supervised eight HCI theses. “Faculty of Education staff travel to Singapore to deliver the coursework units in both degrees, and to provide thesis supervision for the doctorate, so the same staff are involved, teaching in the same intensive mode as in Perth.”

Over the past 10 years Professor Russell Waugh has supervised eight HCI students.

“Supervising overseas students has been a wonderful experience,” said Professor Waugh. “And the students work incredibly hard. Generating new knowledge means a great deal to the students. And the completion of a world-class doctorate from a top western university gives them increased recognition in their home countries,” he said. “The transnational program makes a great impact in the world: it enhances the students’ self-confidence, and it helps build positive relationships between Australia and Asia.”

Dr Audrey Cheong and Dr Chye Liang Joseph Tan are HCI teachers who both recently graduated with a UWA Doctorate in Education, and they are unequivocal about the benefit of the partnership to the school: “The partnership is a crucial means of ensuring Hwa Chong Institution’s pedagogical research is not only constantly improving but also benchmarked globally,” Dr Cheong said.

HCI is currently in the process of undergoing large-scale reform, and the research expertise of the Institution’s staff play a crucial part in the process: “HCI staff have written papers on critical thinking, independent learning and project work, educational technology and global literacies, and this evidence base has empowered us to not just review our teaching practices, but to also re-imagine the education system entirely,” Dr Tan said.

A productive partnership

Cream of the 2014 crop

More than 40 researchers won awards at the culmination of UWA’s inaugural Research Week.

Although we don’t have space here for details of their winning work, we wanted to acknowledge them by name.

Senior Research Awards went to David Badcock, Cristina Gibson, Nigel Laing, David Pannell, Sharon Parker, Chari Pattiaratchi and Michael Small.

Colin McLeod won the Research Mentorship award and Robert McLaughlin the Impact and Innovation prize.

Mid-Career awards were won by Ullrich Ecker, Aleksandra Filipovska, Marco Fiorentini, Archa Fox, Michael Giudici, Susan Gourvenec, Herbert Ho-Ching Iu, Swaminathan Iyer, Ryan Lowe, Robert McLaughlin, Ajmal Mian, Alistair Paterson, Chris Power, Kerrie Unsworth, Christopher Vernon and Thomas Wernberg.

Early Career Investigators recognised were Sam Baron, Julien Bourget, Hayley Christian, Duc Dau, Barry Doyle, Brett Hirsch, Etienne Laliberte, Chunbo Ma, Gina Ravenscroft, Aaron Robotham, Jeff Shragge, Ferdous Sohel, Sandra Tanz, Georgina Trapp and Gabriel Verret.

We hope you understand that we had to leave out your academic titles, in order to fit in everybody’s names.

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HOLIDAY HOUSE INJIDUP BEACH: Zamia House is an elevated, north facing contemporary home with 180 degree views across Wyadup valley and an ocean view towards Canal Rocks. Injidup Beach is 2km away. The house, set on five acres of bush, is central to Margaret River wineries, restaurants and attractions. The home has 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms (one an ensuite), a large covered deck and open plan living. The house sleeps 8. Discount prices for inquiries through UWA News, starting from $200 per night. Contact Jani on 0418 949 318 or zamiahouse@gmail.com.

QUINDALUP: A charming, recently renovated, fully self-contained redbrick cottage only 400m from beautiful Geographe Bay and 2km from Dunsborough township. Located at the end of a private road, this cottage offers privacy and security, a lovely natural vista out over Toby Inlet Reserve, and is a great cottage for all seasons. Please go to www.quindalup.net.au for further information.

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Professor Peter Leedman
Director, Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research

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Six months later, this visionary plan to safeguard the future of medical research and help relieve the burden of a rapidly ageing population remains unrealised.

Currently the Australian Government invests 0.075 per cent of GDP on medical research. Putting this into context, it represents just two thirds of the average investment made by other OECD nations. For a developed country with aspirations of being a player on the global stage this is unconscionable.

As the Director of the Harry Perkins Institute, wouldn’t it be wonderful to have adequate support for our dedicated researchers to take their work well beyond just the next grant cycle?

The establishment of the MRFF will be a transformational and landmark event in the history of medical research in Australia. We expect the federal government to devise a strategy to generate the funds that does not disadvantage any specific group.

It is a stimulating time for medical research as new technologies, such as genomics, are revolutionising how we make discoveries and advancing these findings at a rapid rate. The next few years will be an exciting time for the Perkins as we embrace the technology and apply it to more rapidly develop new ways to better diagnose and treat human disease – we will work towards introducing “precision medicine”, in areas such as cancer.

Liver cancer is one of the commonest cancers globally and is predicted to have the highest mortality (about 40 per cent) in the next 20 years.

Perkins researcher Professor George Yeoh has been identifying the cells that may hold the key for liver cancer, called progenitor cells. Perkins researchers have discovered a small microRNA that can abrogate growth of liver cancer and may soon enter early phase clinical trials. The Perkins will expand its efforts into this cancer in the next five years, with the aim of developing novel treatments.

Another area of focus for the Perkins is cardiovascular disease and diabetes, including heart attacks, stroke and blood vessel diseases, which remain the main cause of death in Australia for both men and women.