Star quality portraits

By Lindy Brophy

Celebrities who die young tend to have a special place in our collective mythology.

Perth actor Heath Ledger is one of those, and this explosive portrait of him, by Perth photographer Frances Andrijich, is one of many stars in Beyond Likeness, an exhibition of contemporary portraits at the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, in the Dr Harold Schenberg Arts Centre.

The photograph was commissioned in 1999 by The West Australian newspaper for a magazine cover. “The story was about Heath being a rising star in Hollywood, coinciding with the release of his two films, Two Hands and 10 Things I Hate About You,” Frances said.

“I saw both the films at a private viewing, to get the feel for the direction we wanted to take,” she said. “We wanted to reflect Heath’s personality and add elements from his films through location and gesture.”

Frances chose Jacksue Gallery in the city, which, at the time, was used by a group of artists in which to live and work. She chose the kitchen because she thought it had a 10 Things I Hate About You feel to it.

“I envisioned Heath doing something really energetic like a martial arts move,” she said. “He was quite shy when I first met him, but once I told him about my idea and the action we wanted, he took the cue like a true professional and grabbed a saucepan from behind him.

“For me, the final image is reminiscent of the paintballing scene in 10 Things I Hate About You.”

Curator of the exhibition, Winthrop Professor Ted Snell, said Frances Andrijich’s photograph of Heath Ledger captured his effervescent vigour.

“For everyone who sees it, the subtext of his tragic early death and his phenomenal international success is implicit in the catalytic spark that ignites him,” he said. “Of course not all images of Ledger carry this reading – some neutralise it or simply obliterate it – yet this photograph epitomises his life and achievements in a brilliant moment of explosive energy.”

With works sourced from the Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra, the National Gallery of Australia and from commercial galleries, artists and collectors from around the country, Beyond Likeness looks further than physical resemblance to explore how contemporary portraits re-present each subject, their inner life and their achievements.

Another star of the show is a portrait of Brad Pitt in a pensive mood, in shorts and socks.

Beyond Likeness runs until 28 July.
100 steps closer to UWA Centenary

Graduates are slowly making their way around the Oak Lawn.

The path that commemorates former students, the Graduates’ Walk, has nearly 100 new pavers, making a total of 255.

It is planned that the path will eventually extend all the way around the Oak Lawn with several thousand plaques embedded in it, celebrating the achievements of UWA graduates.

The Graduates’ Walk is a project of The Centenary Trust for Women (CTW), which provides financial and other assistance for women who have problems continuing their tertiary education at UWA.

The most recent section, on the east side of the lawn, was officially opened this month and all the graduates and families who had bought a paver were invited to the celebration.

The pavers are solid granite and the names and degrees of graduates are carved into them and sealed with a protective coating.

Marita Gardener, project officer for the Graduates’ Walk in the Office of Development and Alumni Relations, said the overall aim of the project was to create significant income for the CTW to provide support to female students; to reach, engage with and bring to campus graduates who may not yet be active alumni; to further the university’s outreach program to foster philanthropy at a personal and family scale, to encourage ongoing involvement over many years; and to contribute to the celebrations of the University’s centenary.

The granite pavers cost $1,500 which is fully tax deductible. Only one person is featured on each inscribed paver but there is a 10 per cent discount for families who choose to buy three or more pavers.

“The pavers not only leave a legacy for the recipient but they impact on the lives of UWA students who are at risk of withdrawing from studying because of financial pressure or personal issues,” Ms Gardener said. “Buying a paver helps CTW to help these women – and makes you and your family feel proud.”

Art preserves living ancient history

Thrombolites, sometimes called the stepping stones of life, have inspired a biological art exhibition in Mandurah.

The living growing rock-like formations of Lake Clifton (south of Mandurah) are 2,000 years old and directly descended from the earliest known forms of life on earth.

They once dominated Achaean seas (3.8 billion to 2.5 billion years ago) but now survive in only a handful of places on the planet.

The Lake Clifton thrombolites are threatened by the 21st century environment and UWA’s biological arts centre, SymbioticA, decided to work with the local community to focus on their plight and move their unique art practices from the laboratory to the lakeside.

The result of four years work by SymbioticA, the City of Mandurah and interested artists is the exhibition, Adaptation, at INQ8 Gallery in Mandurah.

SymbioticA Manager and Adaptation curator, Cecelia Cmielewski, said that to respond artistically to environmental concerns was a long-standing interest for many artists.

“However, to do so in a way that goes beyond the didactic or descriptive is the challenge. Working with SymbioticA provides a way into artistic interpretation through biology and scientific methods,” she said.

One of the collections in the exhibition is Carmel Wallace’s photographic series, Visualising Adaptation: Surface and Beyond.

Her work, at the microbial level using microscopy, investigates the structures of the thrombolites. It also includes studies of water samples from the Lake which have evaporated on the slide, enhancing the crystalline structures and microorganisms.

Adaptation runs until 10 June.
Science student Matthew Goss loves living at St Georges College.

“Who wouldn’t love living in a castle?” he laughed. “And while I’m eating my breakfast I look up, and there’s my great-great-grandfather looking down at me.”

The portrait above the majestic fireplace in St George’s dining hall is of UWA founder Sir John Winthrop Hackett, and Matthew, his great-great-grandson, is the first of the dynasty to study at UWA.

The 18-year-old has left his home in Zimbabwe to live and study at the University to which his great-great-grandfather gave life. “We all knew the story as we were growing up, that Grandad had left a vast amount of money to establish a university, but it wasn’t until I came here on a family holiday a few years ago that it really hit me what he had done,” Matthew said.

“When I saw UWA and Winthrop Hall I was bowled over. I just felt wow, I hadn’t thought of anything so big and wonderful.”

The University has awarded Matthew a scholarship to study here and St George’s College has also recognised his family by giving him a residential scholarship.

He is majoring in neuroscience, with a second major in marketing. “I’m keeping my options open. I’m not sure what I want to do. I might follow my mother, who is a nurse, into medicine, or my father, into business.”

Matthew said he had thought of following his famous forebear into journalism and still might end up there one day. “I used to win the English prizes at school, so I guess that could be his genes.”

His great-great-grandfather’s genes are also evident in his face, although it’s not such an obvious likeness that other diners at St George’s do a double take. A streak of philanthropy has also been handed down. Matthew’s mother, Sir John’s great granddaughter, helped to set up an equivalent of Australia’s Royal Flying Doctor Service in Africa. And Matthew worked with children in orphanages and under-privileged schools while he was still at school. “It’s a bit overwhelming in Africa, where the need is so great,” he said.

“It was my long-term plan to come here to study, and I’m so grateful and appreciative of the University and the College supporting me to do this.

“Everywhere I go, the names Winthrop and Hackett remind me of my family. It still feels very special. I went to the intercollege ball in Winthrop Hall a few weeks ago and I just love it; it is an amazing building.”

Matthews’ praise extends beyond the University to the safety of Perth’s streets and its public transport system.

“In Harare, it just doesn’t occur to anybody to go walking in the city at night, but it feels so safe here. And I love catching the air-conditioned bus down to Fremantle to see my aunt. We have no public transport in Harare. I guess I’m experiencing a bit of first world fever!”

The line of descendancy from Sir John Winthrop Hackett to Matthew Goss goes directly through the women in the family: from Deborah, Sir John’s daughter, to her daughter Jacintha, to her daughter Kim, to her son, Matthew.

“My grandmother, Jacintha Chapman, was christened in Winthrop Hall, then she moved to Melbourne as a child, then to Zimbabwe. She and her husband, my grandfather, still live in a cottage on our property outside Harare. My favourite family story of hers is about her grandfather’s (Sir John’s) mother-in-law, Grace Bussell, riding into the sea on her horse at Busselton, to save people from a shipwreck. When we were down south on our holiday here a few years ago, we saw her name everywhere too.”

Matthew has a younger brother, Nicholas (17), who is thinking about studying at UWA, and a sister Joanna (10).
Quality teaching the cornerstone for a successful society

Throughout May we celebrated excellence in teaching and learning at our University. This is a tradition that was established 21 years ago when our Student Guild first initiated the Excellence in Teaching Awards. From showcasing innovative approaches and methods to focusing on the finer points of time-tested pedagogical tools, Teaching and Learning Month – organised by our Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning – encourages all of us to think and, most importantly, talk about the ways in which quality teaching and supervision underpin all our academic activities.

The theme of this year’s Teaching and Learning Month – Experiencing New Courses – gave staff and students the chance to reflect on their experiences of the first few months of our new regime. New Courses is the most radical change to the way we teach since our foundation and aligns our University with other leading international universities, ensuring that a UWA education provides the best possible opportunity for graduates to pursue careers anywhere in the world.

The world’s leading universities, including ours, attract highly qualified academic staff and ensure that teaching is a highly valued activity. Our annual celebration of teaching recognises the achievement of fine teachers who promote excellence in their work and in so doing have a positive impact on our students, on the University as a whole and on the wider community.

Our teachers help to ensure that the student experience is much more than just a training ground for employment and that when our students graduate they leave with more than a degree. They leave as well-rounded individuals capable of mature and critical thinking, as people who have the ability to take control of their lives and to make choices about how they might reach their potential to contribute to a free and flourishing society.

Education is integral in shaping our wellbeing and our culture, and it is important for us to recognise and positively reinforce the role of good teachers and supervisors.

At UWA, our teachers continue to work towards the University’s aim of achieving international excellence, and contribute greatly to the University’s overall aspiration of becoming one of the top 50 universities in the world by 2050.

The Faculties and students have embraced the opportunity to recognise their excellent teachers with continuing high numbers of student and staff nominations – a reflection of the depth and breadth of quality teaching at UWA and the esteem in which our teachers are held. The key to sustaining our reputation lies in the commitment and quality of our staff.

And with New Courses starting this year, we have been given the opportunity to renew and enhance our curriculum and practice.

Finally, I would like to congratulate those staff members who won teaching awards this year and to thank all within the UWA community who continue to work in so many ways to improve the student learning experience.

Engineers pioneer surgery

Two of our mechanical engineers have won the Sir George Julius medal for ground-breaking research in image-guided surgery.

Winthrop Professor Karol Miller and Associate Professor Adam Wittek have been working towards improving clinical outcomes through appropriate use of technology.

“We conduct research in the development and application of computational mechanics and biomechanics for surgery simulation, image-guided surgery, injury prevention, understanding of mechanisms of disease formation and related fields of biomedical engineering,” Professor Wittek said.

Their projects are funded by the Australian Research Council, National Health and Medical Research Council and other agencies.

The George Julius Medal is awarded for the paper selected by the Board of the College of Mechanical Engineers as the best in the discipline of mechanical engineering.

New Hackett Chair

Winthrop Professor Kadambot Siddique is UWA’s new Hackett Professor of Agriculture.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Paul Johnson, offered the Chair to Professor Siddique, director of UWA’s Institute of Agriculture, after it was relinquished by Emeritus Professor Alan Robson on his retirement.

The prestigious position is formal recognition of Professor Siddique’s outstanding leadership in both agricultural education and research.

In a letter to Professor Siddique, Professor Johnson said it was also for his “collegiality and tireless work … in promoting the University and the Faculty at regional, national and international levels.”

Professor Siddique, who is also Associate Dean Research in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, has an international reputation in crop physiology, production agronomy, farming systems, genetic resources, and breeding research in cereal, grain and pasture legumes and oilseed crops.

He was made a Member of the Order of Australia in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List last year.
Top Italian students choose UWA

Three of the top students from a Milan university are wishing their semester at UWA could be extended.

“We are just getting to understand the culture,” said Paolo Razzini, who has been studying Chinese, Asia in the world economy, and Global Business, as part of his degree in international relations.

Paolo, Filippo Oncini, who is studying Social Sciences and Social Psychology, and Paola Cavanna (Law), all said they loved the easy-going nature of Australians and were impressed with the friendliness of their teachers at UWA and the way courses were run.

But their biggest surprise was seeing students going barefoot on campus.

“It is something you would never see in Italy,” said Paolo.

The students are Premier Scholars from the Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan, which sends its top 15 students each year to what they describe as one of five prestigious universities in the US and Australia. Students studying Law, Psychology and Political Science can apply for UWA. Others can choose from the University of Queensland, the University of California (Davis and Los Angeles) and the University of Chicago, depending on their courses.

“We are very lucky to come here,” said Paola. “You always think of Australia as just the east coast. Nobody knows about Perth.”

They said university teaching in Italy was very traditional, with no student interaction. “There are very few tutorials, just lectures, you study, then you do the exams, which are worth 100 per cent,” Paola said.

Paolo has studied in Paris and said that, although there were more tutorials and smaller classes in French universities, there was still a distance maintained between teachers and students. “But that is not the case here at all. It feels very exotic to us!”

Filippo said the faculties in European universities were too big for teachers to remember their students’ names. “Here, they all call us by name and we use their first names too.”

The students have been living at St George’s College for the semester and Filippo said they were surprised at how young many of the students were. “In Italy, we don’t start university until we are about 19. Here, some of the students are 16.”

They all said that while they loved Italy, they felt their future lay elsewhere. “The current economic situation in Italy is grim and the country is struggling,” Paolo said. “Here, you feel you could easily get a good job and realise your dreams if you work hard.”

He is considering doing a PhD on sustainability and energy policies. His International Relations studies are focused on the recent development of renewables. “It’s a huge advantage being here in a state that has such potential for renewable energy. But I see there is a lot of work to be done concerning energy efficiency,” he said.

He and Filippo took a trip to the north of the state and were overawed by the size of mines, facilities and even the roads.

“We saw the real Australia: vast blue skies and red dirt,” Filippo said. “The whole concept of space in Australia is very different from our perceptions in Europe,” Paolo said.

The students won their fully-paid scholarships to UWA with their good undergraduate marks, their facility with the English language and their extra-curricular experience and activities. They will return to Milan at the end of semester.
The new ‘home’ for engineering students should help to produce well-balanced graduates.

The Clough Engineering Student Centre was opened at the start of the semester on the ground floor of the Mechanical and Chemical Engineering building, looking out over James Oval.

It is already a popular place for students to relax or, in their words ‘chill out’. They can study, chat, eat and drink, access wifi with their laptops and tablets, and lounge around on big green sofas: making the most of their student days.

But they also use the big bright space for working on group projects, holding meetings of up to a dozen different student bodies and doing the team work that they will be expected to do when they are in the workforce.

It is a space with a unique balance which university Engineers Club Education Vice President Tom Henderson says is a big hit with the students.

“Before, we would have to study in the library where we couldn’t eat or drink,” he said. “If we wanted to work on a group project, it was always difficult to find a place to get together. And the old UEC common room was a bit grungy, so not popular with all the students.”

The UEC was allocated a room in the Monadelphous Integrated Learning Centre but both students and staff soon realised that the noise from the common room was disturbing nearby classes, so they had to give up that space.

“This room used to be the undergraduate physical sciences library, but it was superseded by the big new Science Library,” Tom said. “Then it was earmarked for a first year centre. But with the new courses, we no longer have first year undergraduate engineering students.”

It is a perfect space with plenty of natural light, a choice of seating, a kitchen, wifi, printing and photocopying, a meeting room and four individual study rooms.

“I’m a big advocate of group learning,” Tom said. “There has been a push over recent years towards a lot more group-based activities, which is great experience for us, because when we’re out in the workforce, we’ll be working in teams. And there really wasn’t anywhere suitable for us to do this before.”

The four study rooms are designed for groups who need quiet to concentrate, or who want to make a lot of noise or who need privacy.

Rachael Penning-Bourne, manager of external relations in the Faculty of Engineering Computing and Mathematics, said student groups including UEC, Engineers with Borders, Robogals and discipline-specific groups were pleased to have the board room for their meetings.

“It enables them to conduct their business in a professional way,” she said.

Clough Engineering Ltd donated $300,000 towards the new student centre, which is available to engineering students from all the different disciplines. The Centre was also supported with a generous personal donation from Dr Harold Clough.

Clough’s CEO Kevin Gallagher said that as an engineering, construction and asset support contractor, Clough was very proud to be sponsoring this state-of-the-art facility, which provided an open-learning base for students.

“Attracting and nurturing bright young engineering talent is key to Clough’s long term sustainability,” he said. “We are delighted to continue our long-term relationship with UWA to help achieve this objective through the Clough Engineering Student Centre.”
Governor Stirling Senior High School is about to seal a partnership with UWA and some leading engineering firms to help them start teaching engineering at high school level next year.

While engineering is already a subject students can take in year 11 and 12 for their WA Certificate of Education, the plan at GSSHS is to run the program from year 8, with projects designed by UWA staff and students, and mentoring from UWA and companies including Sinclair Knight Merz and Beacon.

Associate Professor Jeremy Leggoe, Deputy Dean, External Relations, in the Faculty of Engineering Computing and Mathematics, has been liaising with the school for more than a year to help set up the program. It will begin at the start of the school year in 2013, when GSSHS moves back into its newly refurbished premises.

“They are building purpose-designed workshops for the engineering students,” Professor Leggoe said. “There are still lots of details that need to be sorted out, but the plan is for us to help them design a couple of projects a year for each year group. Then students from groups such as Engineers Without Borders and Robogals will participate in activities with the students, and staff will go out to the school from time to time. There is also a possible opportunity to get the school teachers involved in projects with our courses here.”

If you’re at the age where police and doctors seem to be getting younger, wait until you see the engineers.

The school is part of the WA Education Department’s gifted and talented program and will become a specialist centre for engineering education. It is also part of the UWA Aspire program which targets schools whose graduates seldom come to UWA.

The UWA-GSSHS engineering program has several goals, one of which is to encourage the high school students to study at UWA and to promote engineering as a career pathway.

Dean of Engineering, Winthrop Professor John Dell, said a two-pronged initiative was needed to achieve this.

“First, we need to get high school (and primary school) students to maintain their interest in mathematics,” he said. “We believe that showing students, through practical engineering examples and projects, how maths works to get practical answers, will be a strong motivator for them to continue their maths studies.

“We also need to show them that engineering is the biggest tool for social change that our society has. Engineers not only implement this change but can influence the direction of this change.

“Engineering is more than calculating the right answer. It is about sustainability, social impact and environmental responsibility and finding solutions to the very big problems facing the world, including climate change, poverty, supply of clean water and health services.”

The school will offer two streams in its engineering program: academic and vocational. “The academic stream is likely to appeal to the students in the gifted and talented program, who want to continue on to study engineering at university,” Professor Leggoe said.

“The students in the vocational stream will learn engineering skills that will set them up for taking on a trade when they leave school.”

It is also hoped the program will attract more girls to the study of engineering.

A memorandum of understanding between UWA and GSSHS will be signed soon.

School students would be mentored by University students in groups such as Engineers Without Borders
New Courses breeding a new generation of first year students

The nature of UWA’s new professional programs will almost certainly be shaped by the students who graduate from the new undergraduate courses. Teaching staff heard during Teaching and Learning Month from the University of Melbourne’s Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Professor Pip Pattison, about the impact of their new undergraduate courses on the postgraduate courses and how they were taught.

Professor Pattison, who was responsible for implementation of the Melbourne Model curriculum, was the speaker at a Distinguished Visiting Teacher Public Seminar during Teaching and Learning Month, which followed the theme of Experiencing New Courses.

Winthrop Professor Denise Chalmers, Director of UWA’s Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, said Professor Pattison’s experiences were most interesting.

“The students starting the postgraduate courses in Melbourne such as medicine, engineering and architecture, are older and more experienced than the school leavers who used to make up the majority of the first year classes,” Professor Chalmers said.

“They have more skills, have made deliberate choices and are able to deal with topics in depth.

“We need to be very cognisant of this while planning our postgraduate course work.

“The introductory content might still be the same, but the students will be more sophisticated learners, with higher expectations, which makes it more challenging for teachers.”

She said some faculties, such as the Business School, had already learned this, with courses including the MBA.

“And we can learn from those experiences, but when it comes to courses like Engineering, it’s quite a different matter.

“Professor Pattison told the audience that the teachers at Melbourne are enjoying teaching these classes and some had taken the opportunity of changing the curriculum to create more holistic courses.”

At the awards night for UWA’s Excellence in Teaching Awards, the guest speaker, Kerry Sanderson, said that Western Australia must get out and promote its education and research alongside its mining and business opportunities. Ms Sanderson has just completed three years as WA’s Agent-General in London, after a long term as CEO of Fremantle Ports.

This year’s UWA Awards for Excellence went to: Paul Lloyd at the Business School and Malcolm Fialho in Equity and Diversity for excellence in provision of support to students; Professor Jane Heyworth at the Faculty of Medicine Dentistry and Health Sciences, for excellence in teaching; Assistant Professor Ambelin Kwaymullina at the Law School for excellence in an early teaching career; and to Fiona Crowe and Katie Parsons at St Catherine’s College, for excellence in contributions to student learning.
You need quiet to really listen

Silence is a rare commodity now.

But many people report that silence can be a terrific catalyst for creative ideas and insights. There’s a legend that Archimedes discovered the implications of displacement as he stepped into the bath. Perhaps the bathroom is one of the few places these days where people have solitary space.

However, some UWA staff have been availing themselves of another opportunity for silence in contemplative retreats and quiet days. They are run by UWA’s Anglican chaplain, Michael Wood, with support from Heather Deighan and Richard Pengelley. Michael presented information about them to staff during Teaching and Learning Month.

He has been running retreats for four years, since reading Parker J Palmer’s books, including *The Courage to Teach*.

“the sessions evolved out of parker J Palmer’s ideas and retreat programs and I thought that UWA staff could benefit from them,” he said.

Palmer is a US author and educator who focuses on community, leadership, spirituality and social change. He is the founder of the Centre for Courage and Renewal which has developed various retreat programs for teachers and community leaders. He is a Quaker and his approach emphasises the value of quiet time to reflect, and allow inner wisdom to emerge in the company of other people who share a commitment to deep and careful listening.

“In his book, *The Courage to Teach*, Palmer reflects on the courage required to get up in front of a class of students,” Michael said. “Teaching requires not just sound pedagogy but also the courage to put your whole self out there with integrity and authenticity.”

He originally framed the retreats for teaching staff, but they soon expanded to include other academics and professional staff.

The retreat is run once a year, in the week after final exams. It is a two day reflective space at the end of a busy year, and it is held in a bush setting, either in the Perth hills or at Muresk.

“I started the quiet days last year for people who have family commitments or can’t otherwise take two days away.

“These days are also spent in a bush setting, twice a year. This year, the first quiet day was during the non-teaching week in first semester; the second will be during the July break.

“The day starts with a conversation about the underlying principles and boundaries for developing safety and trust – which are essentially about listening deeply to yourself but also listening to others, and not having to offer advice or try to solve their problems,” he said.

“After we agree on the boundaries, we help people to move into a more ‘interior’ space by reflecting together on a poem. Then the rest of the day, from about 11.30am to 3.30pm, is spent in silence.

“Participants can read, go for a walk in the bush, write in their own journals, whatever they like, to help themselves gain clarity in whatever they are thinking about.

“The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Staff say they have had exceptional success in focusing their thoughts once they are removed from the business of their everyday lives.”

The retreats are run along the same lines as the quiet days. Most of them have about six participants but it’s possible to run with groups of up to 20. Michael said some staff had chosen to continue to meet as a contemplative group.

“I’m really pleased that staff are finding them so useful,” he said. “The days are low on content and high on space.”
Unfamiliar academic practices and the English language are not the only challenges facing students from other countries.

There is so much we take for granted that puzzles international students, and Deborah Pyatt and her team in the International Sponsored Student Unit put a big effort into resolving these problems for AusAID students.

A record number of AusAID students are enrolled at UWA this year: 100 students from developing countries are sponsored by the Australian Government through the Australia Awards for Development, most of them doing post-graduate study. A few years ago, the average number of AusAID students was 40.

A new program this year for commencing students is AusAID Connect, a pilot program being run jointly by the Office of Development and Alumni Relations and the International Sponsored Student Unit.

It has seen all 37 of the commencing students meet up with UWA alumni who are keen to offer them a taste of home life.

Penny Young, acting manager of Alumni Relations, said alumni volunteers were matched with the students either by a common field of study or an interest in a particular country.

“They met at a Friday afternoon function at the University Club, then it was up to the alumni, who included some staff members, to arrange for the students to come to their homes for dinner,” Ms Young said.

“Some of the relationships will continue: it is up to both parties what they want and how it works,” she said. Already the feedback has been positive with several alumni advising that the students would be coming to see them again and joining in family activities.

“We hope the program makes a positive difference in the lives of the students, adjusting to being far from home,” Ms Young said.

The students’ problems and challenges are as numerous as their nationalities. (The 37 commencing AusAID students this year come from 23 countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific region.)
“For example, over the past few years we have found that some of them are unable to read maps,” Ms Pyatt said. “They are used to simply standing on a hill to work out where they are or how to get somewhere. So instead of just giving them a map and showing them how to use it, we have taken them up to the top of the DNA tower in Kings Park and shown them the lay of the land, pointing out the city, the University and other key landmarks.”

The students arrive five weeks before the start of semester, for intensive training in academic writing at the Centre for English Language Teaching. “As soon as they arrive, we ask them to look around for a few days, write down what puzzles them, what delights them and the similarities with and differences between Perth and their home,” she said.

Five days later, they gather together, at a cultural transition workshop, with their questions. “One year we had an Iraqi student ask, fearfully, why we built our homes so close to the water. Weren’t we afraid of tsunami and sharks? This led to a discussion about the beach and we confirmed that many of the students didn’t know how to swim, so we offered to assist them with swimming lessons, so they could make the most of living near the coast.”

A Vietnamese student once asked why our parks were empty. “This was in late January, and we had to explain that Australians tried to avoid the sun when it was really hot, which led to us talking about the need for sunscreen, hats and water for hot days. We also explained that the parks were free for anybody to use, and they could set up a badminton game or use a public barbecue, at no cost.”

Queries from students this year included how to apply for a mobile phone plan, where to buy cornmeal, was it safe to drink the tap water and how should we relate to the Indigenous people we meet? The students are given suggestions on how to cope with the transition to a new country and a new culture. They include knowing others who can help, looking after yourself, and leaving the past behind for the time being, to make it easier to concentrate on their studies and not be consumed by homesickness or worries about the situation back home.

“AusAID students are award recipients under the Australia Awards for Development which include scholarships for long and short term courses and professional development opportunities. The Australia Awards for Development are designed to develop capacity and leadership skills so that individuals can contribute to development in their home country and to build people-to-people linkages at the individual, institutional and country levels.

Award recipients are required to return to their countries for at least two years after completion of their studies, to contribute their newly-acquired skills.

AusAID administers a range of programs under the Awards including the Australian Development Scholarships, Australian Leadership Awards Scholarships, Australian Leadership Awards Fellowships, the Prime Minister’s Pacific Australia Awards and Australian Regional Development Scholarships.

At UWA the students’ fields of study are targeted to address priority human resource and development needs of their countries.

Currently, we have students from Indonesia studying forensic science; Pacific Islanders studying climate change; a civil engineer from Bhutan looking at design for earthquakes; a lawyer from Indonesia, who was involved in the Bali Nine court case, working towards a Master of Laws; and the second doctor from The Gambia doing a course on infectious diseases.

About 17 per cent of AusAID students at UWA are working towards their PhDs across all Faculties. Another 71 per cent are studying at Masters level, and just four per cent are doing bachelors degrees. Just under half of the students are studying in the Science faculties.

African students are the biggest cohort of AusAID students this year.

“AusAID’s increased budget in Africa means that the proportion of African students has risen exponentially,” Ms Pyatt said. Most of the African students are studying natural resources management, mining-related and other sciences.

Already the feedback has been positive with several alumni advising that the students would be coming to see them again and joining in family activities. We hope the program makes a positive difference in the lives of the students, adjusting to being far from home.”

“AusAID students at the first semester cultural transition workshop with facilitator Marie Martin
Creating a tsunami in a tray is actually easier than baking a tray of biscuits – and it has a sweet result for primary school children.

Assistant Professor Zoey Durmic is one of 20 UWA scientists who volunteer their time to teach children about science, and demonstrating earthquakes and tsunamis has been one of her most testing challenges.

“I like to work with young school children,” Professor Durmic said, “as they like hands-on activities (like me), rather than just sitting and listening. When they made their own little tsunamis, they were thrilled, running around and shouting ‘I love science!’”

Professor Durmic has been volunteering at Goollelal primary school in Kingsley for many years as part of the Scientists in Schools program.

National Volunteers Week was celebrated recently in Australia, and the CSIRO-run Scientists in Schools program took the opportunity of thanking UWA scientists and mathematicians who turn their skills to enthusing school children about science and mathematics.

“I want children to realise that science is not about serious people sitting around doing complicated things,” she said. “It can be pure fun and exciting, and it’s important that children feel enthusiastic and interested. I’m also keen to promote UWA in the northern suburbs and encourage more students from this area to come to UWA.”

And just how did her students create a tsunami in a tray?

“The children each created a ‘beach in a tray’, using water and playground sand, adding plants, plastic animals and Lego cubes as buildings. We put the trays on a table and banged the table hard to create the waves. Then they could see how an earthquake from below the surface can create a tsunami and what the effects could be,” Professor Durmic said.

She is revitalising the concept of a ‘resident scientist’ program at the school. “When my children were at Goollelal, we tried to set up a system where children could email me with whatever science questions they had. If I couldn’t give them an answer, I would find out from scientists in other disciplines.”

“It didn’t work very well at the time, partly because, seven or eight years ago, not all the children had access to computers or email. Now many of them have their own laptops, so I’m starting it up again and I think it will be a great success this time.”

Professor Durmic is part of the Rumen Microbiology Group in the School of Animal Biology. She works at UWA’s newest ‘campus’ at Floreat, within the CSIRO complex. She and her colleagues are trying to reduce greenhouse gases emitted by sheep and cattle by feeding them plants that are antimicrobial and can kill methane-producing microbes in the animal gut.

Other scientists in the volunteer program include Assistant Professor Duncan Wild from the School of Chemistry and Biochemistry, whose year five students are currently growing crystals and will investigate why some grew and some didn’t. Jenni Wallis, marketing manager for the Faculty of Life and Physical Sciences, said the scientists’ contributions ranged from a one-hour talk once a year, to regular activities with school children. “Some involve the children more than others, such as the scientist who set up a blog before his trip to Antarctica so the children could follow his research,” she said. “Whatever their level of involvement, it is all greatly appreciated by the schools and the program, which relies on volunteers to bring real world science and mathematics to students and school teachers.”
Students planted the dunes, made deliveries for FoodBank and cleaned up the grounds at a dogs’ refuge during a two-hour community blitz for National Volunteers Week.

The Guild Volunteer Hub is a thriving centre offering opportunities for students to become involved in the community. But it stepped up its activities during the volunteers week, almost doubling the number of students who have volunteered for community work this year.

Hub assistant Sally Beer said about 100 students had already done community work through the Guild initiative this year and a further 80 became involved during volunteers week. About 1,000 students were involved last year and it is expected that at least this many will do some volunteering this year.

The report that led to the development of new Courses, Education for Tomorrow’s World, initially recommended that students be required to devote a minimum of 20 hours to community service during their undergraduate years. With further consideration, the University decided not to require students to volunteer but to encourage them to do so and to work in partnership with the Guild Volunteer Hub.

“There is definitely a growing culture towards volunteering,” Ms Beer said. “The Hub started two-and-a-half years ago, and last year Murdoch University followed our lead.

“The students are most interested in face-to-face programs. The most popular are our refugee programs where students teach English at Parkwood Primary School and Balga Senior High School.”

The Hub’s regular programs also include teaching computer skills, at the Subiaco Library, to people who live in social housing.

This year students have visited Bethanie nursing homes, playing cards and chatting with the residents; they have helped to deliver The Big Issue magazine to waiting rooms and reception areas around the city; they assisted with the running of the Mother’s Day Classic fundraising run at Langley Park; spent a day playing with disadvantaged children for Edmund Rice Camps; and are working at the Rio Tinto Naturescape in King Park.

During National Volunteers Week (14 May to 20 May) the Guild ran VFest, in which they introduced more students to volunteering.

“Our VFest partners were FoodBank, the Shenton Park Dogs Refuge, Cottesloe CoastCare and the intensive English language centre at Parkwood,” Ms Beer said. “Some of these are new partners who we hope will stay with us.”

Wayne Howells, Managing Director of the Guild, said he was confident that student-run events enhanced the ability to attract student volunteers. “The volunteers who run the program also gain valuable experience,” he said.

About 600 students are on the Hub data base. Ms Beer said their volunteer community service was noted on the supplementary student transcripts which sit alongside their academic transcripts.

The University is also working towards an expansion of service learning, which embeds community engagement activities in units of study within the academic curriculum.

Academic Council has recently approved six such units for recognition on a student’s academic transcript as Service Learning Units. An annotation on the transcript will indicate that these involve community service that has been structured and assessed as part of a formal educational experience.

It is expected that more units will gain this recognition in the near future.
The University now has a permanent and sustainable computer recycling system.

What to do with out-dated and unwanted desktop computers, laptops, printers and other accessories has been a growing problem for businesses and even private homes for many years. UWA has tried a few different solutions over the past several years but nothing seemed to work out.

Now we have an agreement with Pickles Auctions, which sells unwanted computer components, or e-waste.

Alain Twynham is the co-ordinator of recycling and waste management in Sustainable Development (Facilities Management). Sustainable Development and Strategic Procurement (Financial Services) have finalised an agreement with the auction company.

Pickles Auctions will come to UWA to pick up big consignments of 15 or more computers. Smaller collections of e-waste will be arranged by Sustainable Development.

“Some of our old computer equipment is refurbished and sold for reuse, while some is sold for its components,” Mr Twynham said. “Faculties and schools who send off big consignments will get some payment, while the reward for recycling smaller amounts of e-waste is simply knowing that it will not be going into landfill! There is a small cost involved in the recycling of e-waste. The details are on our website.”

He said smaller amounts of hard drives, laptops, monitors, keyboards, printers, cabling and mice will be stored in an area in the basement of the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery until there is enough to send it off to Secure Computer Recycling and Disposal.

UWA has taken part in the annual free local government e-waste pick up for the past two years. Mr Twynham said Sustainable Development would use that facility, organised by the Western Australian Local Government Association, if there was enough e-waste in storage at that time.

Details of the service by Pickles Auctions is on the UWA Financial Services website at finserv.uwa.edu.au/sp/contracts/preferred/supplier/pickles

You can download an equipment disposal form from this site.
RESEARCH GRANTS

Grants awarded between 28/04/2012 and 11/05/2012

AUSTRALIAN DENTAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Winthrop Professor Marc Tennant, Primary, Aboriginal and Rural Health Care (School of): ‘Hospitalisations for the Removal of Impacted Teeth in Western Australia – Has Australia Followed the International Trends’—$4,306 (2012)

BHP BILLITON WORSLEY ALUMINA

Winthrop Professor Paul Flatau, UWA Business School: ‘BHP Billiton Worsley Alumina Social Baseline Study 2012’—$33,750 (2012)

DISS AUSTRALIA CHINA SCIENCE AND RESEARCH FUND

Professor Barry Marshall, Professor Jun Xu, Dr Wei Lu, Alfred Tay, Pathology and Laboratory Medicine (School of), Sun Yat-sen University: ‘Strengthening collaboration with Sun Yat-Sen University on novel chemical drug discovery’—$29,500 (2012)

DEPARTMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT, WATER, POPULATION AND COMMUNITIES AUSTRALIAN BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES STUDY

Dr Lori Lach, Gary Barker, Dr Richard Harris, Plant Biology (School of), Curtin University of Technology, Landcare Research: ‘Assessing the Effectiveness of Tramp Ant Projects to Reduce Impacts on Biodiversity’—$69,930 (2012)

FLINDERS UNIVERSITY EX COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGEING

Associate Professor David Glance, Computer Science and Software Engineering (School of): ‘Implementation of Flinders Chronic Condition Management in MMex eHealth Platform’—$75,000 (2012)

MONASH UNIVERSITY EX ARC LINKAGE PROJECTS

Associate Professor Matthew Hipsey, Dr Perran Cook, Earth and Environment (School of), Monash University: ‘Functional Links between Estuaries and their Catchments – How Does Land use Change Affect Estuarine Ecological and Bio-Geochemical Function’—$185,334 (2011-2013)

NHMRC DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Associate Professor Robert McLaughlin, Surgery (School of), Electronic, Electrical, and Computer Engineering (School of): ‘Development of a New Surgical-Guidance Tool for Intra-Operative Tumour Margin Assessment in Breast Cancer’—$539,684 (2012-14)

THE CASS FOUNDATION

Dr Esther Ooi, Medicine and Pharmacology (School of): ‘Travel Grant – Arteriosclerosis Thrombosis and Vascular Biology Conference Kinetics Metabolism Meeting San Francisco USA – $3,500 (2012)

WA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Associate Professor Rhonda Clifford, Winthrop Professor Ian Jacobs, Sandra Saltner, Assistant Professor Frank Sanfilippo, Medicine and Pharmacology (School of), Primary, Aboriginal and Rural Health Care (School of), Population Health (School of): ‘Epidemiology of Anaphylaxis in Western Australia (EPAWA): Identifying the Burden and Management of Anaphylaxis in the Western Australian Population’—$77,645 (2012-14)

WA DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND PETROLEUM

Paul Duuring, Earth and Environment (School of): ‘Predictive Exploration for BIF-hosted Fe deposits in the Yilgarn Craton, WA’—$120,000 (2012)

CLASSIFIEDS

TO LET

NELDALS: Fully furnished and equipped home in Neldals. 1940s Neldals home with four bedrooms and two bathrooms, recently renovated, fully furnished and equipped. Polished jarrah boards, plantation shutters, air conditioning, two big plasma TVs, wireless internet, parking for four cars. Photos available. Lease of six months or longer. Rent from $1,500 per week, $4,000 bond. Please contact Kenny on 0428 896 210.

FREE – DORDOGENE: Holiday accommodation. Self-contained apartment in one of the most beautiful Medieval Villages of the Pened d’Or, Belves. Train and all amenities. For more details see website www.belves.info or contact Susana Melo de Howard on 9246 5042 or 0438 878 425. Email: susana@belves.info

MOUNT HAWTHORN: Fully furnished and equipped accommodation available immediately. A beautiful one bedroom church conversion with new kitchen and bathroom. Huge living room (90m²) with 4.5m ceilings. Close to the Mount Hawthorn café strip and five minutes in the car to Leederville. Short and long term stay available. Please contact David on 0437 803 853 or email david.vanmill@uwa.edu.au

ALFRED COVE: Lovely home, fully-furnished, available for lease from December 2012 through to July 2013. Three bedroom, one bathroom (separate w/c), two separate living areas, modern, open-plan extension to kitchen, family, dining area. Polished boards and reverse-cycle air-conditioning/heat throughout. Easy-care gardens and swimming pool (will be managed). Great location, walking distance to Canning Hwy for transport to Perth (15 min), Fremantle (10 min) or UWA (25 min). Cafes and restaurants at the end of the road (Alfred Cove and Attadale). Photos available or inspection welcome. $600 (negotiable) per week. Please contact Renee Arnold rennee.arnold@uwa.edu.au or 0448 807 414.

SOUTH FREMANTLE: Charming, fully renovated and fully furnished family home in South Fremantle. Available for rent from early July 2012 to mid-January 2013. Three bedroom, two living areas, office/studio, modern kitchen and bathroom, alfresco dining, wireless broadband. Five minutes walk from cafes and beaches. If you are interested, please contact Carolyn Oldham, carolyn.oldham@uwa.edu.au

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Finding our fit

By Colin Thurlow

In the middle of last year we finally broke ground on starting refurbishments of the Recreation and Fitness Centre.

Even with an estimated timeframe of four months, it wouldn’t be until February this year that everything was completed. Sometimes it just takes a little patience to find your fit, and this time slow and steady has definitely won the race.

When I started at UWA Sports, the refurbishment had already begun, but there was something missing: a sense of direction and purpose necessary to really bring the whole process to fruition. I saw great potential in the Centre, and was determined to bring that to light.

What was important to me right from the beginning was to make the Centre as accessible as possible: there should be a place for everyone no matter what they’re into. I wanted people to feel encouraged to come in and be comfortable working out. At the same time we needed to offer our clients a world-class training facility to enable them to achieve their highest potential.

The first installation was the Cardio room. Completely stripped of its old spin bikes and treadmills, the room was refitted with brand new lifestyle-focused TechnoGym™ equipment. These advanced training machines, treadmills, elliptical trainers, stationary and recumbent bikes, combined the latest fitness technology, communication, and interactive trends: allowing users to track their workouts in a highly efficient manner, and also keep up to date with their university schedule via emails, LMS, and social media.

This was the first step: a gym that worked for the users not against them. We needed to meet the demands of our clients, who were often time-poor, and the TechnoGym™ was perfect. There was no longer that disconnect between Uni life and the gym, and the system allowed for smooth and focused workouts. We were on the right track.

Over the next few months the refurbishment blazed ahead, finishing up in time for the start of Semester 1 in 2012. The process was finished off in grand fashion with the opening of three new workout areas upstairs and the full installation of new LifeFitness™ equipment on the expanded main Gym Floor.

If the Cardio Room was the first small step, then this opening was the giant leap. We’d made the transition from stock standard gym to world-class training facility, and it was with great pride that I opened the doors to the Centre at the start of first semester this year.

New floor space and new equipment meant we were at last set up to deliver the fitness service we’d always intended; diverse, accessible, affordable, and of the highest standard. Even this though, is just another step forward in our path towards excellence. With one of the best facilities in Western Australia available to us, we weren’t about to start resting on our laurels just yet.

Upgraded facilities bring upgraded customer service with it, and the UWA Recreation and Fitness Centre staff have been working tirelessly to deliver the best training programs, fitness advice, health planning, and specialised workouts on a daily basis.

Good customer service and good equipment are two sides of the same coin in fitness. Clients need to be given high-quality instruction to stay safe and get the most out of their workouts, whether that’s in a Group Fitness class, riding a bike, or bench-pressing.

The UWA Recreation and Fitness Centre is more than just the exercise hub on Crawley campus. It’s truly become a beacon for students, staff, alumni and the community searching out their own fit. It’s a place to socialise, get active and engage with others in a positive and healthy way. No matter what you’re into, you’ll fit in at UWA Sports.