



Inside this Issue

- Welcome to Wollongong 1
- Community Engagement Grants Scheme 2
- Staff Profile:
Dr Pia Winberg 2
- High achievers make UOW history 3
- I.House opens international donor wall 3
- Public Events at UOW 4

Office of Community and Partnerships

Please keep us informed of your community engagement activities and initiatives so we can help heighten awareness of this important aspect of the University's operations.

Contact:
Community Engagement Manager on Ext. 3110 or community@uow.edu.au



Wollongong to officially welcome international students at civic reception

Wollongong will welcome international students to the region at a civic reception and community festival to be held on Friday, 27 February 2009.

In its second year, the 'Welcome to Wollongong' (W2W) event will feature indigenous performances, live music, markets and information stalls to showcase the region, celebrate diversity and profile the presence of international students in the region.

'It's an event that officially welcomes newly arrived international students to the city, including those studying at schools, TAFE and University,' W2W Coordinator, Katie Moran said.

'It's a way of making the students feel part of the community and showing the community the contribution that international students make to the local region,' Ms Moran said.

The civic reception, hosted by local ABC Radio broadcaster Nick Rheinberger, will commence at 11am at the Illawarra Performing Arts Centre (IPAC) featuring a performance by the Wadi Wadi Mix tribe dance group. Following the reception, the event will move outside into the Civic Plaza where there will be information stalls, roving circus performers, performances by the Sydney Police band and the Cook Island Dance troupe, along with an Australian BBQ.

Organised by a community working group comprised of representatives from Wollongong City Council, UOW, TAFE, Illawarra Ethnic Communities Council, South East Sydney and Illawarra Area Health (SESI AH), Police, Tourism Wollongong and other community groups, the event is an opportunity to profile the city and recognise one of the city's largest industries.

It is estimated that over 7,000 international students are living and studying in the Illawarra including 6,423 at the University of Wollongong (at October 2008).



International students not only bring economic benefits to the region, they also serve to enrich the cultural diversity of our city.

More information about the Welcome to Wollongong event, including transport and a program, can be found on the website: <http://w2w.uow.edu.au>.

All students and members of the community are warmly invited to attend this special event and celebrate the diversity and presence of international students in the region.

Community Engagement Grants Scheme project well underway

A resource kit to help children with cerebral palsy is just one of the six projects to receive a Community Engagement Grant in 2008.

Six months since receiving her grant, Faculty of Informatics lecturer Dr Sim Lau, has produced a DVD resource kit to help children with cerebral palsy carry out stretching exercises at home. In collaboration with the Physiotherapy Department at Wollongong Hospital and The Disability Trust, Dr Lau's project aims to provide a more visual approach to managing the life-long disability that affects a child's ability to control and coordinate different parts of their body. With filming completed in October 2008, the next phase of the project is to develop a website that allows parents and members of the community to download exercises that suit their children, as advised by their health professional.

Introduced in 2005, the Community Engagement Grants Scheme aims to encourage and support projects that are collaborative – working with a community partner – and that have a clear community benefit. Applications will be called for in March 2009.

Further information on the Grants Scheme can be found at <http://www.uow.edu.au/about/community/grantsscheme>.

Anyone interested in finding out more about Dr Lau's project can contact her on 4221 4132 or simlau@uow.edu.au.



Senior Paediatric Physiotherapist, Joanne Morrell from Wollongong Hospital with Matthew, waiting for the filming to begin.

NOMINATIONS OPEN Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Community Engagement

Nominations close 9 March 2009

The Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Community Engagement was established in 2006 and recognises and encourages exceptional community engagement by a member of the University staff and group of staff.

Further information on the award, including Guidelines and Nomination Form, can be found at <http://www.uow.edu.au/about/community/awards>.

Staff Profile

Dr. Pia Winberg

Director
Shoalhaven Marine and
Freshwater Centre
Shoalhaven Campus



Community engagement activities

Community engagement activities are a central part of my scientific career. Indeed, my new role as Director of the Shoalhaven Marine and Freshwater Centre (SMFC) is in part a result of my involvement with a number of collaborative community projects.

I firmly believe as a privileged, educated person, I have a responsibility not only to develop sound scientific research, but also to share accumulated knowledge with others and interpret its relevance to society. This approach has been rewarding for myself and the community groups with whom I have been involved.

My role at SMFC is to a large extent about understanding the interactions between human society (local communities) and the local environment. Therefore community engagement is a cornerstone in my role at SMFC.

Some of the projects I have been involved with include assisting volunteer groups with scientific input, such as Bushcare activities or underwater surveys. Although many scientists will avoid the grey area of community science, there is a wealth of knowledge that can be exchanged for the common good. The numbers of volunteers that get to see and experience things a lab-focused scientist never gets to see can be invaluable. There are also a number of indigenous groups that are looking for the opportunity to use their accumulated knowledge and love of natural systems, flora and fauna. Again, I learn as much from them as they do from me, and hopefully I can open some pathways for them to follow.

In a community such as the South Coast with high unemployment, the contribution of scientific understanding to the local debate about what local industries and developments may or may not be suitable to the region is vital to improving the socio-economic situation for the future.

Community engagement has been and will be pivotal to my personal and career development but the potential socio-economic (including environmental) benefits may be the greatest reward.

Contact community@uow.edu.au if you are interested in being featured in the **Staff Profile**.

Students recognised for community service and academic achievement

Four exceptional UOW graduates have made history by jointly being awarded the highest University award – the Robert Hope Memorial Prize – for outstanding achievement and contribution to the University and wider community.

Cameron Ferris, Benjamin Moffitt and twin sisters Teena and Teesha Downton were all awarded the \$10,000 prize at graduation in December last year.

‘I’m proud that I’ve been able to contribute to the University and the community,’ Teesha said. ‘Also, I found that community work complements my academic work and seeing these types of links is nice.’

Both sisters were involved in the Student Health Alliance for Rural Populations (SHARP) at UOW where they were involved in the International Health Forum in 2007 and National Close the Gap Day. They have also been heavily involved in their local Kiama community with Teesha performing a total of 200 hours community service as part of St John’s Ambulance, and Teena helping to raise over \$1,500 for the Starlight Children’s Foundation.

Science graduate Cameron Ferris has been an active volunteer for the Siemens Science Experience for high school students and has worked as a tutor for disability services. He volunteers at Reiby Juvenile Justice Centre in Campbelltown, mentoring youth in detention, and runs a weekly youth group in his local church for high school aged students.

“I found that it was really important to do activities other than just study at University. Working in the community made my degree a bit more meaningful to me,” Cameron said.

The fourth recipient, Benjamin Moffitt, who studied a Bachelor of Arts Honours, served as president of the UOW Greens and was involved in a number of environmental campaigns. He was also involved in the Black Opal Leadership Program and wrote for two student publications.



Chancellor Michael Codd AC with three of the recipients of the Robert Hope Memorial Prize: (from left) Teesha Downton, Cameron Ferris and Teena Downton at the December graduation ceremonies.

I-House opens international donor wall

Titled ‘Postcards from the Globe,’ a donor recognition wall has been established outside the newly landscaped entrance of International House, to recognise alumni who have donated to the student residence.

At a special event held on Friday, 16 January, UOW Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Professor Rob Castle officially opened the wall and globe structure.

The wall contains plaques designed to look like postcards, which will include a personal message from alumni donors and their national flag in place of a stamp.

“The opening of Postcards from the Globe is an important event - bringing together recognition of all those who have lived at International House over 29 years, and those who have donated to give opportunities for new students to enjoy an international learning experience,” Director of UOW International House, Dr Lindsay Oades said.

The opening begins a six-month fundraising campaign where residents from the past 29 years will be approached to donate money that will contribute towards scholarships for new residents.

I-House currently hosts 218 residents from 35 nations - and is part of a proud tradition known as the I-House movement, which started 100 years ago in Philadelphia with the aim of promoting international friendship.

Top right: Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Rob Castle spins the globe at the opening of Postcards from the Globe. With him are the student residence managers of International House, Dr Lindsay Oades and Alison Hemsley.



Above: A group of international delegates from International Houses around the world were present at the opening of Postcards from the Globe.

Public Interest Events

13 February 2009

Presentation- Indigo Foundation Positive Tales from Afghanistan

The UOW Cares Workplace Giving Committee welcome the Indigo Foundation to UOW. The Foundation is proud to present Salman Jan to talk about his experience traveling back to Afghanistan last year to assess the progress of our aid project set up to improve education and life opportunities for boys and girls in Borjegai, Afghanistan.

Venue: Building 20, lecture theatre 2.

Time: 12.30-1.30pm

Contact: Kieran Londridge 0418 420 112

27 February 2009

Welcome to Wollongong

A cultural festival and civic reception to welcome international students to the Illawarra. The Festival aims to provide international students with more information about what is happening in the community, and for the community to engage with the large and diverse international student population studying in Wollongong.

Venue: Civic Plaza, Illawarra Performing Arts Centre (IPAC)

Time: 11am-2pm

Website: <http://w2w.uow.edu.au>

Contact: Katie Moran kmoran@uow.edu.au

11 March 2009

Public Lecture - Uni in the Brewery South Coast Marine Parks: Benefits, Biodiversity and Baited Underwater Videos

Hear prominent researchers from the University of Wollongong explain their ideas and research in a relaxed and participatory environment over a few foaming ales. The general public is very welcome to attend and join in the discussion! First speakers for the year are Dr Pia Winberg and A/Prof. Andy Davis from the School of Biological Sciences.

Venue: Five Islands Brewery (at the WEC in Wollongong)

Time: 5:30pm to 6:30pm

Website: <http://www.uow.edu.au/research/unibrewery>

Contact: Vicky Wallace vwallace@uow.edu.au

20 March 2009

Community Tour - Seniors Week

To celebrate Seniors Week, the University of Wollongong is offering a FREE campus tour for members of the community.

Venue: University of Wollongong

Time: 10am

Bookings: community@uow.edu.au or 4221 5131.

For the latest What's On information: visit <http://www.uow.edu.au/events>

Girls encouraged to consider a career in Engineering

Students in Years 10, 11 and 12 from around NSW participated in a three-night residential summit, 'So you think you can Engineer?' at the University of Wollongong last month.

The summit attracted 94 young women from as far as Wagga Wagga, Ballina and Byron Bay.

Organiser Dr Montse Ros, from the School of Electrical, Computer & Telecom Engineering, said the summit was an important event for the Engineering profession.

"We want to encourage young women to think about Engineering as a career, because they're under represented in the workforce," she said.

Participants were exposed to a large range of engineering disciplines including environmental, civil, mining, mechatronics, materials, mechanical, electrical, computer and telecommunications engineering.

The summit's key sponsor was the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) and part of the program included a site visit to the RTA, as well as talks from RTA Scholars.



At the opening ceremony, participants and group leaders show off bright purple work boots given to them by a conference sponsor, proving that they were 'engineers with attitude.'

New Community & Partners website

The Office of Community and Partnerships is pleased to launch the new Community & Partners website.

The re-developed site has a number of new additions, including Community Engagement Case Studies and a variety of Community Communications, with the aim of improving access and connection with our communities.

Visit the new website at www.uow.edu.au/about/community. Your comments and feedback are welcome.

UOW Community News is produced by the Office of Community & Partnerships. Your contributions and comments are welcome. Please email community@uow.edu.au or phone 4221 3110.