

ISSUE 55 • MARCH/APRIL 2010

uniken

Green light:

*Action at the Lowy
Cancer Research Centre*



UNSW
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Melancholy needs its moment • France's bawdy theatrical past

ON THE COVER

6-8 Green Light

To be officially launched in May, the Lowy Cancer Research Centre is already open for business. Its world-class researchers are making a difference to the lives of adults and children with cancer.

FEATURES

5 A class act

The first students to come to UNSW under the ASPIRE program have set foot on campus for the first time.

9 In profile

Combining natural enthusiasm with a love affair of research, UNSW's new Dean of Science is a natural fit for the role.

10-11 A melancholy moment

Melancholia might be a far more serious form of depression than originally thought.

12-13 Opinion

Although President Barack Obama has pledged to broker peace between Israel and the Palestinians, Associate Professor Ian Bickerton argues this remains unlikely unless Iran is brought into the equation.

14 The X factor

UNSW students have designed and built a new artists' residence in the unique desert environment of Fowlers Gap.

15 A theatrical turn

It was Paris's answer to Shakespeare's Globe – with bawdy goings-on and guests like the Marquis de Sade. Now a longstanding mystery about France's first public theatre has been solved.

REGULARS

16 Learning and teaching

17 Community engagement

18 Noted: new books and dates for the diary

19 Five minutes with ...

Julian Disney, Director of the Social Justice Project.

20 Early career

Cover photo: Brett Boardman photography

Uniken is produced by the UNSW Office of Media and Communications

T 02 9385 1583

E uniken@unsw.edu.au

www.unsw.edu.au/news/pad/uniken.html

Managing editor: Mary O'Malley

Editor: Susi Hamilton

Editorial team: Judy Brookman, Denise Knight, Steve Offner, Fran Strachan and Peter Trute

Design and production: Gadfly Media

Proofreading: Pam Dunne

Australia Post print approved

PP224709/00021

UNSW, Sydney NSW 2052

CRICOS Provider No 00098G



Celebrating **60 YEARS** of extraordinary achievement



Men of strength ...
(left to right) David Sharp, Obada Kayali and Jim Baxter

Photo: David Paterson, UNSW@ADFA

Lab talk ... at ADFA

Behind every great academic, is a team of technicians. Dr Obada Kayali, who is based at UNSW@ADFA, has led research which has turned the ash waste from coal-fired power stations into a global environmental solution, but he says he would have been lost without technical support. The high-strength, lightweight building materials are now being produced in China. Dr Kayali and the technicians who currently work with him, David Sharp and Jim Baxter, speak about the research process.

Obada: I make a point of speaking openly with my technical staff and I involve them in all aspects of my work. Without them, dreams would remain dreams. Because of the nature of my experimental work, I rely on their expertise.

It is a relationship of mutual trust – they ask questions of me too. They are sharing the same dream and the fruits of the labour. There are patents for the work that we do and I make sure that the benefits are shared with them.

David: I first met Obada 20-odd years ago and we've come to know each other's work. I've developed ways to measure the stress and strain ... on different types of building material test specimens, which is really important when you're working with engineers. Obada's unique in that he recognises our contribution. We can sometimes drive the direction of the research based on the resources that we have. We're reasonably lucky in that we have good equipment.

You get to work with students from all over the world. I also don't like doing the same thing all the time. I have the luxury of working at my desk, in the lab and out in the field.

Jim: Obada's very friendly and down-to-earth and he involves you. He values your contribution. Quite often he will come up to us and say, "What's the feasibility of this?" It's the sort of job that you can make as much as you want of. You never know how a project is going to go at the start – for every great innovation there are three or four that don't work out. It is amazing to see how things turn out with a bit of luck and a lot of hard work!

Interviews by *Susi Hamilton*

To nominate a researcher and technician for "Lab talk" please email uniken@unsw.edu.au.

The write stuff

UNSW has been named as the only university partner of the Sydney Writers' Festival. One of the Festival's international guests will be coming out to the campus during the event, which runs from May 17 to 23. The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, which put forward the successful bid, will be organising some panels at the Festival, as well as nominating chairs for other events.

In other literary news, acclaimed journalist Kathy Bail has started as the new Chief Executive of UNSW Press.

Bail is just the fifth person to manage the Press since it began in 1962. She replaces Robin Derricourt who has retired after 13 years.

For the past three years Bail has been editor of *The Australian Financial Review Magazine*. She has also been editor of *The Bulletin*, *HQ Magazine*, and of the Australian edition of *Rolling Stone*.

Photo: Stephan Schuster



Out of Africa ... Dr Hayes collecting samples

A powerhouse of energy

Eco-friendly bricks made with ash waste from coal-fired power stations could be a feature of UNSW's Tyree Energy Technologies Building (TETB).

The "Flash Bricks" are made using fine particulate coal ash called fly-ash in a process invented by UNSW@ADFA civil engineering senior lecturer, Dr Obada Kayali (see opposite page).

The technology is being commercialised by Vecor Australia under an agreement signed with NewSouth Innovations and the Flash Bricks are now being investigated for use in the TETB.

Work is underway on the TETB on the lower campus after Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard visited UNSW to turn the sod at the building site in December 2009.

When completed late next year, the TETB will be a six-star Green Star rated building and a showcase of sustainable design with features including solar panels manufactured at UNSW's soon-to-be-constructed Solar Industrial Research Facility.

Photo: Carmen Lee Platt, Encapture



Education Minister Julia Gillard with UNSW alumnus Sir William Tyree at the sod turning ceremony

Human genome breakthrough

In a major breakthrough, scientists have dramatically expanded the volume of genetic information available to medical researchers about complex human diseases and their potential treatments.

An international team of scientists, led by researchers from the Children's Cancer Institute Australia (CCIA), the University of New South Wales (UNSW) and Penn State University in the US, sequenced the genomes of indigenous southern Africans and found them to be among the world's most genetically diverse people.

The genomes of four Kalahari Desert Bushmen and an ethnic Bantu are the first to be sequenced from an indigenous population. More than 1.3 million new genetic variants have been added to databases of human genome variation which until now have been largely Eurocentric.

Featured as the cover story in the prestigious journal *Nature*, the discovery has important implications for medical research, providing potential markers for the origins, treatments and cures for many of the most complex diseases, including cancer.

Significantly, the genomes are personalised, with all participants named and their medical histories recorded. Among the participants was Nobel Peace Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu – a representative of the Bantu community and a Global Elder.

The next issue of *Uniken* will feature a cover story on groundbreaking UNSW research on the origins of the species.

The business bottom line

The AGSM MBA is the leading full-time program in Australia and ranks 36th in the world, according to the *Financial Times* (UK) 2010 ranking of the top 100 MBA global programs.

This is the 11th consecutive year the AGSM program, delivered by the Australian School of Business at UNSW, has ranked in the top 100. For the past four years, the program has been in the top 50.

Notably in this year's survey, the AGSM MBA program was ranked 10th in the world for international mobility and international experience.

The main driver of the overall ranking score is the career success of alumni, especially salary progression.

Millions for research

A bionic eye capable of restoring vision to the blind is a step closer to reality after the Federal Government awarded \$42 million in funding to a consortium including leading researchers from UNSW. The funding will go to Bionic Vision Australia (BVA) to further development of a functioning bionic eye.

BVA is a consortium including the University of Melbourne, UNSW, the Bionic Ear Institute, the Centre for Eye Research Australia and the Victoria Research Laboratory of NICTA. The project is also supported by researchers from the Australian National University and the University of Western Sydney.

Meanwhile, UNSW researchers have received \$5.1 million from the Federal Government to continue groundbreaking work to improve assessments and outcomes for people with dementia.

The funding is part of a \$21.7 million package for three Dementia Collaborative Research Centres (DCRCs) and five Dementia Study Training Centres across Australia.

UNSW hosts one of Australia's three DCRCs, each focusing on a different area of dementia research.



Photo: Rachael Hastie, Harbour City Films

Step closer to World Cup dream

NSW Premier Kristina Keneally has visited UNSW to support a team of former refugee and migrant youths on the road to this year's FIFA World Cup.

The team members, aged 15 to 18, are part of Football United, a UNSW initiative set up three years ago. It was founded by Anne Bunde-Birouste, from the School of Public Health and Community Medicine, and involves 600 young people in Sydney's west.

The team is participating in the first *Football for Hope Festival*, being held in the final week of the World Cup competition.

Attending a team training session at UNSW, Ms Keneally announced a one-off grant of \$20,000 to help the team get to the World Cup in June. This matches a Football Federation Australia donation made to the team and takes them closer to the \$150,000 needed to get to South Africa. For more information about the team and how to donate go to <http://footballunitedprogram.org/>

Building healthier cities

The UNSW City Futures Research Centre has secured \$1.5 million in funding from the NSW Health Department for a new program to investigate how to make our cities and suburbs better for our health.

The NSW Healthy Built Environments Program (HBEP) is the first collaboration of its kind between health officials and planning academics.

As Australia faces increasing health costs from an ageing population and rising rates of obesity, diabetes and lifestyle-related diseases, health workers are seeking to influence the design of cities to make them more supportive of healthy ways of living.

Urban planners from the City Futures Research Centre will undertake a wide-ranging investigation to learn how changes to urban design and planning can improve health in NSW.

“There’s a nice spread, from everyday things like lying and cheating, through to thinking about philosophical principles,” – Associate Professor Philip Cam, from the School of History and Philosophy on the trial of ethics classes being implemented in some NSW primary schools, *Sunday Telegraph*

“We are neither safer, nor do we feel safer [thanks to the extra expenditure],” – Professor Chris Cunneen, Faculty of Law, who with Associate Professor Eileen Baldry from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences say that NSW’s prisons are unsustainable economically and socially, *Sydney Morning Herald*

“Applying maths to matters of the heart is always a dangerous prospect. In human life when you’re dealing with emotions, you have to think much harder.” – Professor Tony Dooley from the School of Mathematics and Statistics on his formula predicting the ideal age for partners to marry, *Adelaide Advertiser*

“A key issue is that the whole cell vaccine contained hundreds of antigens, which gave broad protection against many strains of pertussis (whooping cough),” – Associate Professor Ruiting Lan from the School of Biotechnology and Biomolecular Sciences explains that the bacteria which causes the cough has mutated, eroding the protection afforded by vaccination, *Daily Telegraph*

“There are a lot of philanthropists now saying, ‘I don’t want a 7 per cent return; I will settle for 2 per cent in the knowledge I will get a 100 per cent social return.’” – Cheryl Kernot, Centre for Social Impact, *Illawarra Mercury*

“Politicians such as Obama, like Ben Chifley (Labor prime minister from 1945 to 1949), who tried and failed to nationalise Australian banks, forget we owe our wealth and living standards to capitalism. They now set out to destroy the hand that feeds them in the only way they know: ban anything they do not understand.” – Professor Peter Swan, Australian School of Business, *The Australian*



Aspiration and inspiration ...
Taniela Afu with Carol Fong

A class act

As the academic year gets underway, some of our new students have set foot on campus with the help of a UNSW initiative. Fran Strachan reports.

There were times last year when Taniela Afu never imagined he'd even finish his HSC, let alone go to university.

But UNSW's ASPIRE Program, a social inclusion initiative that promotes tertiary education to students from low socio-economic backgrounds, gave him the confidence to stick with his studies and become the first in his family to make it to university.

"My parents never went to university so they're ecstatic," says Taniela who was accepted into the Diploma of Humanities, a program run by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, which provides an alternative pathway into university for students who have suffered educational disadvantage.

"I never thought about going to university until I took part in ASPIRE," says the 18 year old. "The student ambassadors encouraged me to set goals and try harder at school, which really increased my confidence."

ASPIRE Project Manager, Fiona Nicholson, says it's inspiring to see the first group of students who were mentored through UNSW's program reach their goal of beginning a tertiary education.

"This is an incredible milestone and a great

indication of how successfully students are engaging with the program," she says.

And Taniela won't spend his first days alone. His former classmate, Carol Fong, will be starting her BA Arts/BA Education at UNSW, the result of hard work and some extra help from ASPIRE.

"I never thought about going to university until I took part in ASPIRE."

Both students attended Marrickville High School, one of the 11 schools taking part in the ASPIRE Program.

"It's really comforting to know that I've got established contacts at UNSW with the program and that I can touch base with them whenever I need to," says Carol who took part in the program for three years.

Twenty-three students who participated in the ASPIRE Program gained entry into UNSW for 2010. A total of 188 students from ASPIRE-affiliated schools were made offers to a NSW/ACT university this year.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Professor

Richard Henry says the innovative program has already attracted national attention despite being a relatively new initiative.

"We're delighted to be welcoming the first ASPIRE Program students to UNSW. Central to the program's success to date is the understanding that it's not lack of ability that prevents some students from gaining a tertiary qualification but low expectations and lack of confidence," he says.

"The program's expansion to primary schools recognises the need to boost aspirations much earlier in a student's life."

ASPIRE has grown rapidly since its inception in 2008 thanks to funding by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and Citi Foundation.

More than 1,500 students – up from the inaugural intake of 340 – will take part in the program this year, including students from five metropolitan primary schools. Four rural schools will also take part in a pilot program outside the metropolitan area. •



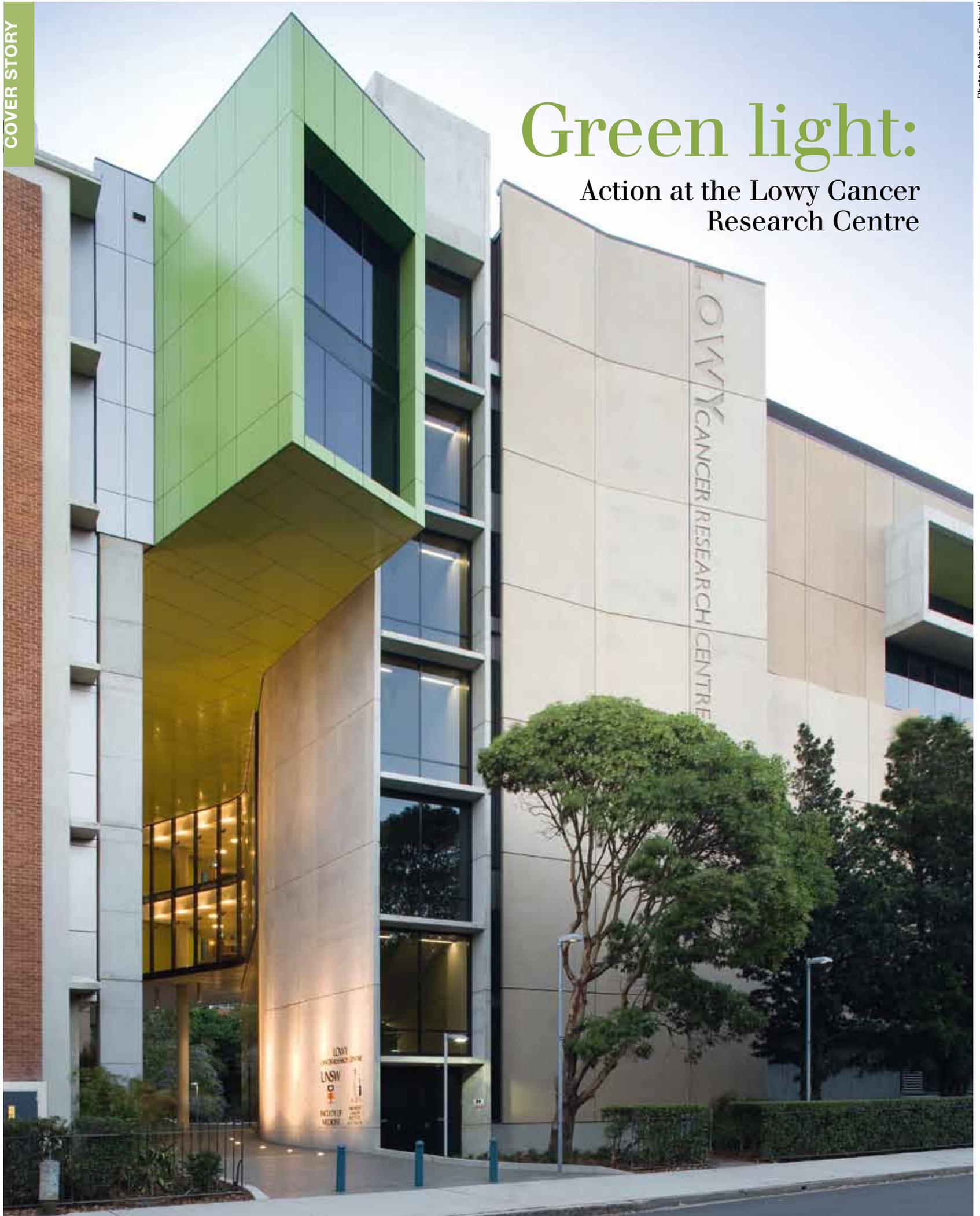
To find out more about ASPIRE in primary schools, go to

www.tv.unsw.edu.au/video/junior-undergrads1

Green light:

Action at the Lowy Cancer Research Centre

Photo: Anthony Fretwell





To be officially launched in May, the Lowy Cancer Research Centre is already turning heads. The facility's world-class researchers are making a difference to the lives of adults and children with cancer. By Steve Offner.

With its lime-green cladding, soaring precast concrete panels and five-star environmental rating, the Lowy Cancer Research Centre is a loud and proud addition to the University's upper campus.

They said it was going to be green, but I didn't think it would be that green," joked Vice-Chancellor Professor Fred Hilmer, on seeing the prominent façade for the first time.

And it's not just the outside of the building that impresses. Walking into the \$100 million-plus building, which utilises the latest environmental technology and is the first facility to be assessed for the Green Building Council of Australia's five greenstar rating, all eyes are drawn to the atrium that towers over six of the building's eight floors and which is flanked on two sides by gleaming laboratories displaying state-of-the-art equipment.

But the most important element of the Lowy Cancer Research Centre is not its bricks and mortar.

Drawn from UNSW's Faculty of Medicine and the Children's Cancer Institute Australia (CCIA), the Centre's 400 medical scientists are among the best in the world. Their number makes the Lowy Cancer Research Centre one of the largest dedicated cancer research centres in the Southern Hemisphere and the first in Australia to bring adult and childhood cancer research under one roof.

The Centre is named after prominent businessman and philanthropist Frank Lowy, whose family donated \$10 million towards the cost of the building. In addition to the Lowy gift and University resources, significant funding was contributed by the NSW and Federal governments.

Announcing the beginning of construction of the Centre two years ago, Professor Hilmer predicted the purpose-built facility would take cancer research in Australia to a new level. "It will be a world-class facility, which will enable us to attract more of the brightest people from around Australia and overseas," he said. The prediction has been borne out. Stellar researchers are returning to Australia and the Lowy Cancer Research Centre, and this year three new cancer-fighting drugs will be used in human trials.

"A particular strength of the Lowy Cancer Research Centre is the ability to translate our discoveries made at the bench into potential new treatments for cancer," says Professor Philip Hogg, the Centre's inaugural Director and NSW Cancer Researcher of the Year.

"Making discoveries in the laboratory is all well and good but the application of those discoveries happens in the clinic," says Professor Robyn Ward, who will lead the adult cancer program and will manage the Centre's human trials. "It's all about getting what's discovered into patient care."

The Centre's location alongside three teaching hospitals Prince of Wales (PoW), Royal Hospital for Women and Sydney Children's Hospital – one of the few hospital campuses to treat childhood, adult and women's cancer – means



Key researchers

Philip Hogg – Inaugural Centre Director

He might modestly refer to himself as simply a biochemist, but Professor Hogg is a world-renowned researcher responsible for the discovery of two cancer-fighting drugs (see main story). The drugs could help make cancer a manageable condition in the long term. He was named Cancer Researcher of the Year in 2009.

Michelle Haber – Executive Director, CCIA

Professor Haber, CCIA's Executive Director and Head of the Institute's Experimental Therapeutics Program, is a cell and molecular biologist. She is known internationally for her research delineating mechanisms of resistance to anti-cancer drugs in the treatment of neuroblastoma, and she is a key contributor in developing new approaches to improving the outcomes of children diagnosed with Acute lymphoblastic leukaemia.

Robyn Ward – Head of the Adult Cancer Program

The clinician responsible for taking the Lowy Cancer Research Centre's discoveries to the bedside, Professor Ward leads the adult cancer research program and will manage the Centre's human trials. A medical oncologist and world-class cancer researcher in her own right, Ward was the winner of the NSW Cancer Researcher of the Year in 2007. Focusing on the interplay of genetic and epigenetic susceptibility, Ward and her team recently discovered an entirely new pattern of disease inheritance, with implications for people with a family history of bowel, ovarian and uterine cancers.

Levon Khachigian – Director, Centre for Vascular Research

A molecular and vascular biologist, Professor Khachigian and his team have developed a smart drug that acts like an assassin to target a master regulator gene that plays a role in some of our most common diseases. Called DNAzyme, the drug has global implications for the treatment of age-related macular degeneration, diabetes-induced blindness, arthritis, certain cancers and cardiovascular disease. Human safety trials will begin in April.

Wendy Jessup – Centre for Vascular Research

Professor Jessup is a cell biologist and biochemist, who leads a team of scientists exploring the mechanisms of cholesterol traffic, storage and export in vascular cells. Their goals are to develop new therapeutic approaches to the treatment of a range of diseases such as cardiovascular disease and cancer.

Murray Norris – Head of the Molecular Diagnostics Program, CCIA

Professor Murray Norris is a molecular geneticist and Deputy Director at CCIA. Professor Norris works on improving the diagnosis, risk classification and treatment of childhood cancer through the use of new molecular genetic technologies. His program uses the technology and small molecule drug screening approaches to diagnose and treat children with cancer. Professor Norris has also developed unique molecular genetic technology that can be used in children undergoing treatment for leukaemia, to allow very small numbers of cancer cells that have survived treatment to be detected. This information has been used to guide treatment in clinical trials.

Glenn Marshall – Head of Molecular Carcinogenesis Program, CCIA

clinical oncologist heading the Cancer Centre at Sydney Children's Hospital, Professor Marshall's research is focused on investigating how cancer first develops. His research also aims to increase the effectiveness of anti-cancer treatments that have low toxicity and are used in combination with other drugs. His work has focused on discovering key proteins that act to enhance, or inhibit, the anti-cancer action of these drugs, which are now being moved into clinical trials.



Photo: Brett Boardman

lab-based breakthroughs can be taken next door and tested. "That's what distinguishes the Lowy Cancer Research Centre from other organisations," says Ward, who also does her own research in cancer genetics.

She is particularly excited about the potential impacts of the two drugs developed by Hogg that she is helping to bring to human trials. Both are novel mitochondrial toxins that "starve" tumours to death by cutting off their blood supply. A first-generation version is already being used to treat cancer in the UK and hopes are high for the second-generation compound, which has attracted financial support from the Cancer Institute NSW.

"The 20th patient is currently being treated in the UK and the results so far are promising," says Hogg. "Our second-generation compound is about 20-times more effective in lab-based testing and this drug will be trialled here in Sydney later this year," Hogg added.

The trials support Ward's vision for a comprehensive cancer centre spanning the Lowy Cancer Research Centre and PoW campuses. "It will be very exciting to take a drug developed at UNSW, and put it into human early-phase studies on campus at the only centre in the state that has a Food and Drug Administration approved early-phase trial facility," says Ward.

A third drug, a "genetic assassin" developed by Professor Levon Khachigian, targets a master regulator gene responsible for a range of diseases. Trials of the drug in skin cancer patients are due to begin in April.

On the childhood cancer front, CCIA has developed unique molecular genetic technology that enables the highly sensitive and specific detection of small numbers of residual cancer cells in patients undergoing treatment for Acute lymphoblastic leukaemia. This unique diagnostic technology has been used in three clinical trials to determine how well children are responding to treatment, allowing clinicians to modify technical protocols accordingly.

"From the beginning, we have been committed to defining and achieving improved treatment and survival rates for children with cancer. Our track record in world-class translational research will only be magnified by the opportunities the Lowy Cancer Research Centre provides," says Professor Michelle Haber, Executive Director at CCIA.

CCIA scientists, working closely with collaborators, have also developed a new approach to the treatment of Acute myeloid leukaemia, one of the most aggressive forms of the disease. The approach uses an antibody to preferentially target "cancer initiating cells", and may also prove effective in treating other types of leukaemia with fewer side effects. This antibody is currently in clinical trial.

The Lowy Cancer Research Centre has also allowed the CCIA to win a \$5.1m grant from the Australian Cancer Research Foundation (ACRF) to establish the ACRF Drug Discovery Centre for Childhood Cancer – the only one of its kind in Australia. •



Merlin's magic

A rich understanding of the sciences ...
Professor Merlin Crossley

Combining natural enthusiasm with a love affair of research, UNSW's new Dean of Science is a natural fit for the role. By Bob Beale.

If there are people destined for university life, the tall and energetic new Dean of the UNSW Faculty of Science, Professor Merlin Crossley, had just the right start.

"My university experience began in a converted corrugated-iron Nissen hut, serving as a child-care centre, located in the picturesque grounds of St Anne's College, Oxford. My father, John Crossley, was a pure mathematician and my mother, Stella, a pure zoologist who studied under the Nobel Prize winner, Nico Tinbergen."

The family came to Australia when Merlin was four, his parents moving to jobs at Monash University. He grew up in a home literally filled with life. At one point there was "a lizard in the dining room, butterflies in the fridge, caterpillars in jam jars on bookshelves, a sparrow roaming free in a bedroom, ducks and chooks in the yard, three cats and an uncontrollable dog".

At school, he most enjoyed history, literature and languages but chose science as a career. He obtained his BSc at the University of Melbourne, majoring in genetics and microbiology, as well as continuing his studies in classical languages.

A Rhodes Scholarship took him back to Oxford. For his doctoral research he investigated the molecular genetics of haemophilia B and, in particular, an unusual family of patients who recovered from haemophilia after puberty. For that, he received Magdalen College's Edward Chapman Research Award. He later took a research position at Harvard Medical School, where he studied thalassaemia and sickle cell anaemia.

In 1995 he returned to Australia to set up a lab at the University of Sydney, investigating gene control. He is now moving that lab to UNSW. "I'm interested in turning genes on and off. It has recently been demonstrated that biological alchemy – genetic reprogramming – is possible. With a few genes, skin cells can be converted to neurons, or fat cells can be turned to muscle."

"Every now and then something big is pulled out of the darkness and the world is changed forever."

Merlin's research has won notable awards, including the Edgeworth David Medal, the Roche Medal and the Australian Academy of Science's Gottschalk Medal.

At Sydney University he served as Acting Dean of Science in 2004, then as the Director of Research in the University's College of Sciences and Technology. From 2006 to the end of 2008, he was Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

Professor Crossley not only brings to UNSW a life steeped in science but an infectious enthusiasm for his new role and for engaging the Faculty with the internal UNSW community – especially Science's "cousins" in the faculties of Engineering and Medicine – and with the general public.

One of his first tasks was to digest the 2009 report of the international panel of eminent scientists appointed by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Fred Hilmer, to review all aspects of

the Faculty's research.

"There were so many useful messages in that review. One core message was that our research is fundamentally strong. This judgement was quickly proved right by this summer's metrics: best-ever ARC grant round successes, new Fellowships, increasing PhD enrolments, and upturns in undergraduate interest. It's a tribute to the quality of the staff, their efforts and the work put in by my predecessor Professor Mike Archer who built up world-class science in a highly competitive international context.

"The trick now is to consider other advice in the review to ensure that the momentum and the Faculty itself is sustained.

"It's important to make sure that Science fits in and plays its role within UNSW and in a changing society. Every Faculty contributes research and new knowledge, through exploration, discovery and invention. Knowledge is sometimes a preventative medicine, sometimes the raw material for machines, inventions or actual medicines, and sometimes simply a source of wonder.

"Scientists have a responsibility to search optimistically in the upstream reaches, the most fundamental, least illuminated realms of existence. Scientific exploration is a high-risk and sometimes high-cost endeavour but every now and then something big is pulled out of the darkness and the world is changed forever." •

The new Dean of Graduate Research, Professor Laura Poole-Warren, will be featured in the May/June edition of *Uniken*.

A melancholy moment

Once the dominant form of depression, melancholia is today a largely forgotten condition. As Steve Offner reports, a UNSW academic is fighting for the recognition of the illness, arguing lives are being put at risk.

When the world's first antidepressant drug was developed in the 1950s, Swiss pharmaceutical giant Ciba Geigy delayed production arguing that, at three percent of the population, there just weren't enough depressed people in the world to make it worthwhile.

To say Ciba Geigy misjudged the course of future events would be an understatement. Today almost half of all Australians have reported experiencing a mental disorder such as depression, with some studies putting the figure closer to 80 per cent. The global market for antidepressant drugs has grown to more than \$20 billion a year.

The figures themselves are troubling enough. But for professor of psychiatry Gordon Parker – Executive Director of The Black Dog Institute – they represent more than just a dramatic leap in numbers. Parker has conducted extensive research on mood disorders for more than two decades.

“Something has gone seriously wrong in the diagnosis and treatment of depression – with tragic consequences,” he says.

The problem stems from the American Psychiatry Association's Diagnostic and Statistic Manual (DSM), the “bible” for the classification of psychiatric disorders. Parker argues the way the manual classifies depression is “confused”. He is leading an international push to have the DSM changed, including having the extreme

depressive condition of Melancholia reinstated as a syndrome in its own right.

Recognising Melancholia as a distinct and serious illness, rather than melded with other mood disorders, would help focus attention on those most at need and ensure appropriate treatment, he says. Most importantly, lives would be saved.

According to Parker, the problems began in the 1980s, when the diagnostic manual (DSM5) was revised and a new model for classifying depressive disorders was introduced. The new model adopted a dimensional view of depression. “It postulated there is only one type of depression which merely varies by severity,” Parker says. “So DSM5 introduced a category called major depression, another called minor depression, and in subsequent decades a third category called sub-clinical depression.”

The results, Parker says, were predictable. Suddenly the term “depression” was used as a diagnostic label for even low levels of depressed mood – “The sort of normal unhappiness that many people experience.”

It was a major departure. Until then, what most people knew as depression was the serious mood and movement disorder Melancholia.

The concept of Melancholia is centuries old. Originating in Ancient Greece with the Hippocratic idea of ‘humours’, Melancholia was considered a disorder of ‘black bile’. In Shakespeare's day, the concept evolved to refer

simply to the “artistic” temperament. But the reality is far bleaker.

“Melancholia is a serious illness,” says Parker. “Sufferers simply cannot be cheered up. Patients describe an inability to get out of bed and profound concentration impairment. There is often extreme agitation and anxiety, and extreme and inappropriate feelings of guilt: ‘I am worthless and I'd be better off dead and my family would be better off dead too’. These are the things that people with non-melancholic disorders by and large don't report.”

But by the 1980s, instead of being regarded as the only depressive condition affecting perhaps three per cent of the population, Melancholia had been subsumed and effectively “lost” in the new DSM5 model. There are also problems with the model's classifications at the opposite end of the spectrum. While the dramatic increase in the number of those depressed has been largely accepted as the zeitgeist of modern life, can so many of us really be so depressed?

“That's the problem when you define something by severity. There is then always going to be a problem of getting the cut-off right,” Parker says. “The risk is, of course, that you medicalise normal sadness, and to an extent that has occurred.”

This has had a negative impact, not in the least on the standing of psychiatrists. “It is feeding scepticism in the public,” Parker says.

But a more worrying problem is the impact

“Among [melancholia] patients treated only with psychotherapy there is a high incidence of suicide.”

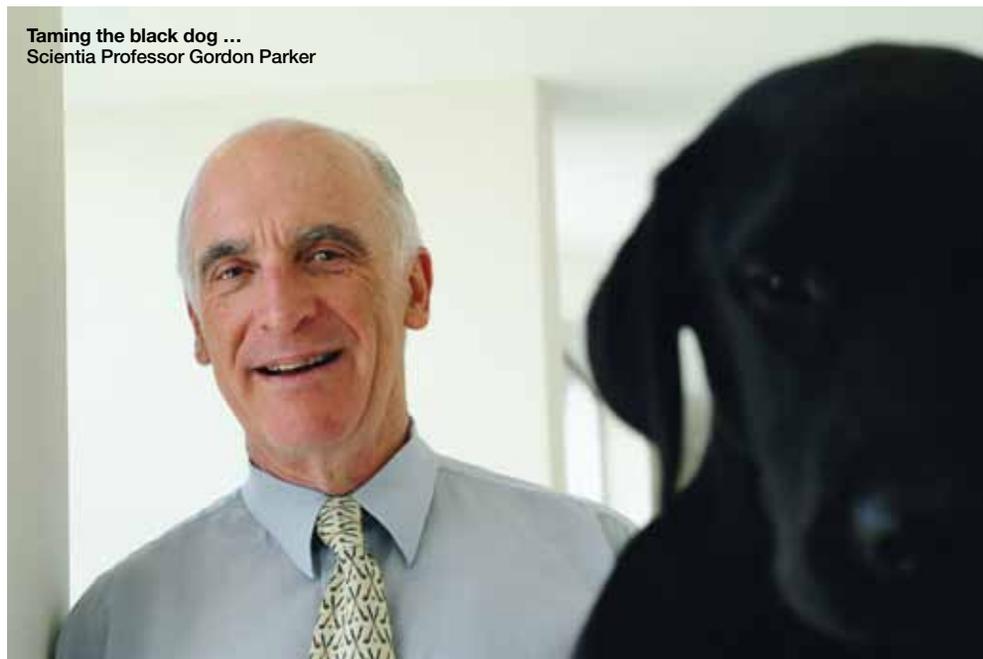
on treatment. By presenting depression as a single condition, hypotheses about causes and treatments become muddled, Parker argues. “At the moment there are probably more people who get the wrong treatment than actually get a treatment tailored to their type of depression,” he says.

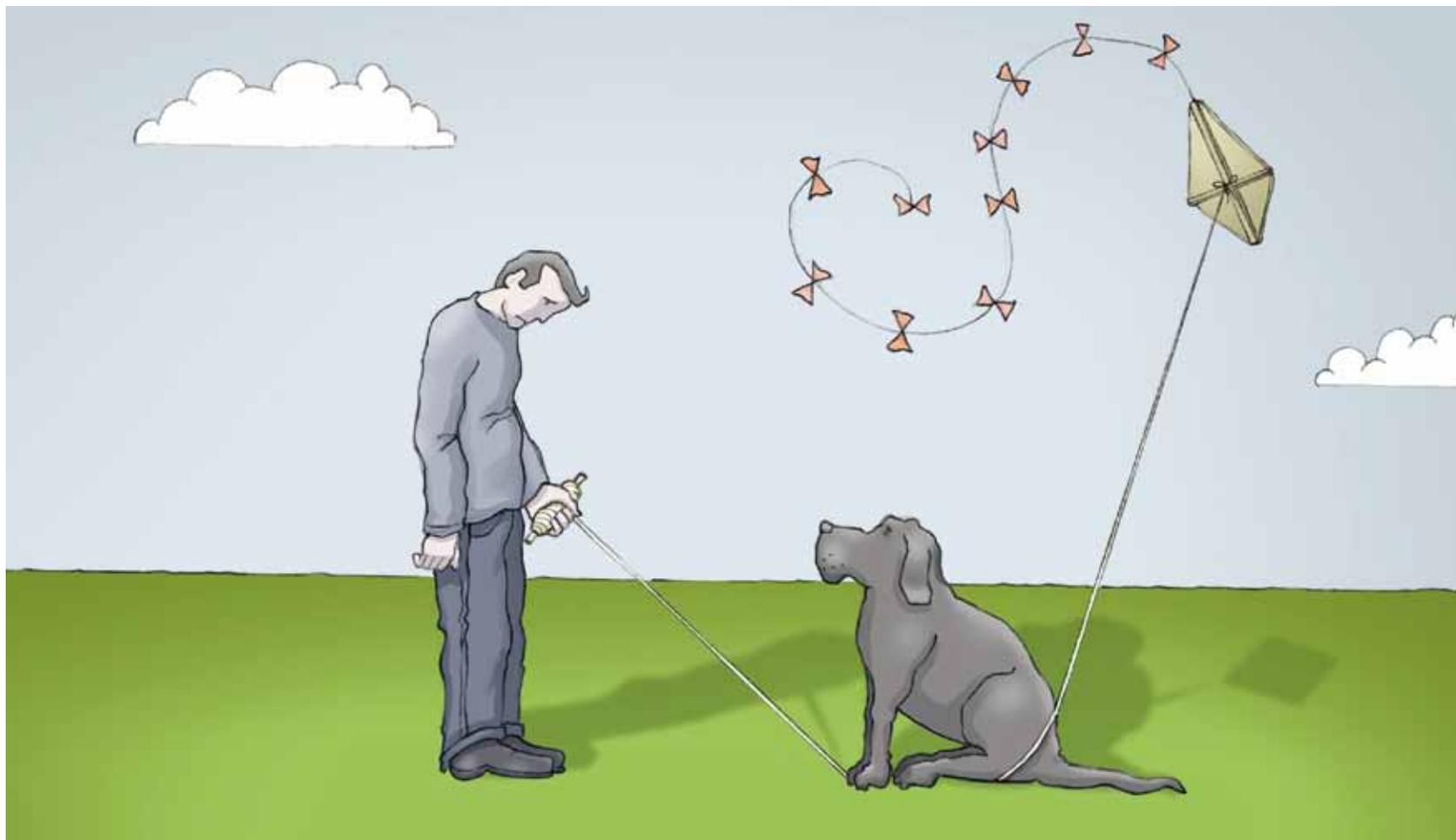
Moreover, the model is at odds with the rest of medicine. “If you went to the doctor because you were breathless, for example, the doctor might say you had major breathlessness. However, you wouldn't feel informed. You'd want to know if you had asthma, or pneumonia or pulmonary embolus because treatments vary accordingly.

“If you feel depressed and go to your health professional, you may well get a diagnosis

Photo: Matthew Johnstone

Taming the black dog ...
Scientia Professor Gordon Parker





of major depression, but the treatment recommended will more reflect the background of the person you are seeing than the condition you have. So if you go to a doctor you'll get a drug, if you go to a psychologist you'll get Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, if you go to a counsellor you'll get counselling.

"It's a bizarre and inappropriate model where the patient is fitted to the therapist's interest instead of the other way round."

And it puts lives at risk. Studies show that patients exhibiting melancholic symptoms – such as those with bipolar disorder – are often misdiagnosed over a lifetime, receiving psychotherapy instead of essential drug therapy. "Melancholia does not respond well to psychotherapy and among patients treated only with psychotherapy there is a high incidence of suicide. These people need drug treatment as the highest priority," Parker says.

In an attempt to get the next edition of the DSM changed Parker – along with 17 international experts – has written a position paper titled "Whither Melancholia? The

Case for Its Classification as a Distinct Mood Disorder". The paper is being considered by a DSM working group.

It's a minority view and very controversial. Change will not come easily. "It's the old story – people are not noticing the very few clothes the emperor has on," Parker says. "The working group has asked for more evidence. They've also made the facile response that the current system has been around for 50 years and therefore why should it change? I don't find that a very intelligent argument."

However, Parker is hopeful that clinical practises can be influenced regardless of the working group's decision. A modified version of the position paper is to be published in the influential *American Journal of Psychiatry*. "So the debate has started. It is now out there and will have a life of its own," he says.

In the meantime, Parker and the Black Dog Institute are recruiting patients and forging ahead with trials – funded by the NHMRC – to investigate the underlying mechanisms and best treatments for Melancholia.

"Meta-analyses have shown that broad action antidepressants are three times more effective for Melancholia than narrow action antidepressants, which in turn are better than psychotherapy. But we need rigorous studies of differing treatments to really make an impact."

While the results will come too late to influence the DSM working group, Parker hopes they will be a significant addition to the debate.

"I'd love to think that with this trial and other studies we could finally wrap up the Melancholia story. Ten years ago I had the fantasy that it would be like Michelangelo chipping away at the rock and the Pieta would emerge. Unfortunately psychiatry is not quite like that." •

Those interested in taking part in the trials should go to www.blackdoginstitute.org.au or ring 9382 9268.



A podcast of the full interview with Professor Parker is available from the health collection of UNSW's iTunesU. Go to www.tv.unsw.edu.au and follow the links.

The bipolar schizophrenia nexus?

The new edition of the DSM is also in the sights of another group of UNSW researchers.

Dr Melissa Green and Professor Philip Mitchell, from the School of Psychiatry, are bringing together sufferers of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder for the first time in a groundbreaking investigation into the diseases' common genetic causes and manifestations.

The researchers believe the study will bring about a change in the DSM classification of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder as separate diseases.

"The international diagnostic manual is currently being revised and it's being considered as to whether schizophrenia and bipolar disorder should be grouped together. It's very controversial," said Green. "There's

not been enough evidence so far to support that change – this study will provide good-quality evidence on this issue," she said.

Green and her team will integrate data from genetics, functional neuro-imaging, cognitive testing and physiological measurements to pinpoint shared genetic susceptibility to the disorders, which may manifest in common cognitive and frontal brain dysfunctions.

The never-ending nightmare

Although President Barack Obama has pledged to broker peace between Israel and the Palestinians, Associate Professor Ian Bickerton argues this remains unlikely, unless Iran is brought into the equation.

The winds of war are again blowing in the Arab–Israeli conflict. In the past year, there has been mounting concern in Israel over Iran’s ongoing nuclear program. That concern has been shared by many nations, most notably the United States. Australia too has voiced its opposition to Iran acquiring nuclear capability. Alarm over Iran’s intentions has been further heightened by the repeated dangerous statements from Iranian religious leaders saying the Jewish state should disappear.

Israeli politicians have considered a range of options in response – from a direct attack on Iran’s nuclear plants to a strong sanction regime. At present, there is a growing sense that US President Barack Obama’s softly-softly diplomatic approach to Iran has not borne fruit, because Iran is seen as refusing to engage in dialogue. In mid-February, Israel’s daily newspaper *Ha’aretz* reported that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu asserted that Israel would not be content with so-called “targeted sanctions” which Western diplomats have predicted could be pursued against the Iranian Revolutionary Guards and other assets of the Tehran leadership, although, the report added, he did not repeat veiled threats Israel has made in the past to attack Iran’s nuclear facilities in a pre-emptive strike. The following week, Netanyahu went to Moscow to, among other things, lobby to prevent the sale of a Russian advanced missile air-defence system to Iran that would be used to protect Iranian nuclear facilities from a possible air strike.

Washington is currently threatening a serious sanction regime under UN auspices, and has warned Israel to show restraint. Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen was concerned with what he described as the “unintended consequences” of a military strike on Iran’s nuclear program.

There is another idea emerging in Israel and elsewhere; that one way to neutralise the total opposition of Iran’s leadership to the Jewish state and the threat of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons, is for Israel to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians. Such an agreement, it is argued, would neutralise

much of Iran’s hatred for Israel and in turn cause the Iranian people to repudiate their leaders’ extremism. Palestinian spokesmen have also indicated that Iranian support for Hamas extremists has done little more than encourage a harsh response from Israel, making the situation worse rather than better for Palestinians in Gaza. Highly regarded Israeli writer and peace activist, AB Yehoshua, an advocate of this view, asserts that the end of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict would have a greater impact on Iranian hostility than any Israeli or US military operation, which would only add to the region’s pain and suffering.

All this is also being played out in the international media. This is not surprising as the Arab–Israeli conflict, like all conflicts, is conducted in the media as well as on the front-line, and interested parties are inclined to see only what they want to see. The relationship between the conflicting parties is now so divided by claim and counter-claim, as well as bitterness and suspicion, if not downright hatred, that it is no longer possible to sort through the highly charged and largely contradictory versions of events and arrive at a balanced evaluation. An example of the media’s inability to accurately inform about what is really going on is the assassination in January of senior Hamas leader, Mahoud al-Mabhouh, in Dubai. This incident, carried out by a death squad presumably organised by the secretive intelligence organisation Mosad whose primary job is to gather intelligence and detain suspected terrorists rather than murder them, did not come to light until revealed by the Dubai authorities more than a week after the event. Only recently did the *Sunday Times* and *Ha’aretz* carry a report alleging that Netanyahu approved the operation in early January and that the operation involved Mossad agents who used forged passports from a number of different countries, including Australia.

This is one of the reasons why we should not get too caught up in whatever the media describes as the current “crisis” or “turning point” in the conflict. Recent developments have done little to alter the overall shape and course of the conflict, which has been going on for more than 60 years. Within a relatively



Hoping for peace ... Arab and Jewish children from Jerusalem release doves in support of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit

short time, today’s “critical” events will have joined the lengthy sequence of repetitive, mostly non-productive, actions that have thus far characterised the conflict, and will hold far less significance than we presently think is the case. That is not to say that we should in any way diminish the deadly tragedy and immense suffering of what is taking place. The 2008–09 war in Gaza, the recent rocket launches into Israel and Israeli air force bombing in southern Gaza, and the ongoing Israeli blockade of people and goods moving in and out of the Gaza Strip, for example, are matters which are nothing if not utterly devastating for the victims and their families. Clearly, although armed force has been all too often employed throughout that period, warfare has achieved no enduring solution.

This is especially evident when we review the past 25 years. Despite its overwhelming military superiority, its ruthless air and land force assaults on Lebanon and the Gaza Strip



and the presence of soldiers manning military checkpoints throughout the West Bank, Israel has not achieved the secure boundaries it seeks, nor has it weakened the determination of the Palestinians to achieve a state of their own. Similarly, two bloody Palestinian intifadas, the firing of rockets into Israel from Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, and the use of “suicide bombers” killing and terrorizing Israeli citizens have not succeeded in furthering progress towards peace and the formation of a Palestinian state in the area designated by the UN when it partitioned the former British mandate of Palestine in 1947. And the future of Jerusalem and Israeli settlement building is still hotly contested.

The overriding, ongoing core of the conflict is that there is, and has been since roughly the end of World War I – even more so since the establishment of Israel in 1948 – a fundamental and irrevocable tension between the inhabitants of former Palestine and the wider international community. Israel was

a creation of the UN as well as of the Zionist movement, and since 1948 the UN has sought ineffectually to ensure the creation of the Arab state it resolved upon. The violent actions of all participants in the region have made the task virtually impossible. With the exception of Egypt and Jordan, the conflicted parties, Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Lebanon and Syria, not to mention Iraq and Iran, seem unable to break the cycle of violence and counter-violence. Until they do there will be no end to the conflict. The international powers, including the United States, have not achieved notable success in bringing the combatants together. A divided, right-wing dominated Israel and a fractured, ineffective Palestinian Authority both seek, and reject, the intervention of the United States and the UN as it suits them.

So while each new co-called “provocative” local incident, however reprehensible, horrible and newsworthy it may be, adds to the list of

grievances both sides count against each other, they do not, of themselves, much alter the predominantly absolutist parameters within which each side operates, or redefine the final objective each side seeks. Clearly, resolution of the conflict is complex. If peace and stability are to be reached in this seemingly intractable conflict, the parties will have to agree, or be required to agree, to an outside third-party intervention as happened in Northern Ireland, or as Israel is demanding of the UN in the case of Iran. US President Obama’s pledges, notwithstanding, I am not optimistic that this will occur in the near future. •

Associate Professor Ian J Bickerton is a Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the School of History and Philosophy, FASS. He has just published *The Arab-Israeli Conflict, A History* (Reaktion Books, London, 2009, 256 pp), \$39.95, distributed by NewSouth Books. For more new books, please go to page 18.



The X factor

Artists hoping to capture the unique desert landscape of Fowlers Gap in western NSW will benefit from a housing project involving UNSW students from a range of disciplines. By Fran Strachan.

An artists' residence at UNSW's Arid Zone Research Station has been built as the result of a multi-disciplinary course that unites the talents of students from COFA and the Faculties of Engineering and the Built Environment. Known as Project X, it provided the students with the opportunity to design and construct a building to a client brief.

"This year's project has pushed the students to a whole new level," says COFA lecturer Carol Longbottom, who has supervised the program with Graham Bell (Faculty of the Built Environment), and Zora Vrcelj (Faculty of Engineering) since the first collaboration in 2007.

"Designing a sustainable, prefabricated building that could be transported to a remote site 17 hours from Sydney and then assembled, posed some unique challenges," says Longbottom.

The initial fabrication phase was completed at the Randwick campus tramsheds.

Industrial design student and project manager, Anton Grimes, was part of a core group of the 40 students involved in the final construction phase who dedicated countless hours and part of their summer break to constructing the \$100,000 project.

"There was no crane access to the site so we had to manually hoist all the columns and frames using pulley blocks and winches," he says. "It was physically demanding work in 40 degree heat, but incredibly rewarding to see the project become a reality."

Longbottom believes it's this real-life experience that makes the course unique.

"Every aspect of the program, from design to construction is student-led," she says. "The students have to work with different disciplines

and personalities – which is exactly what they'll be required to do as professionals."

Advisor to the Macquarie Bank art collection, Julian Beaumont, kick-started the project with a substantial capital gift and the participating faculties have also offered financial support.

Beaumont and COFA Dean Ian Howard have watched the evolution of the building from the students' first sketches.

"The Australian landscape is the most dramatic in the world in terms of its palette and majesty so the idea of young artists being able to develop their practice in an area like Fowlers Gap is very appealing," says Beaumont.

For COFA, the residence will provide additional accommodation for students and researchers from the Imaging the

Land International Research Initiative, which advances interdisciplinary research surrounding the land and land-based image making.

"For cultural and environmental reasons, it's important to expose COFA students, whether local or international, to outback Australia because the physicality of the arid zone is so challenging," says Professor Howard, who believes this project has been "enormously challenging educationally" for the students involved.

"This isn't like any other university course, things aren't just handed to you, you learn by doing and working with others, and although it's a bit of a cliché, the more involved you are the more you have to gain," says Grimes. •

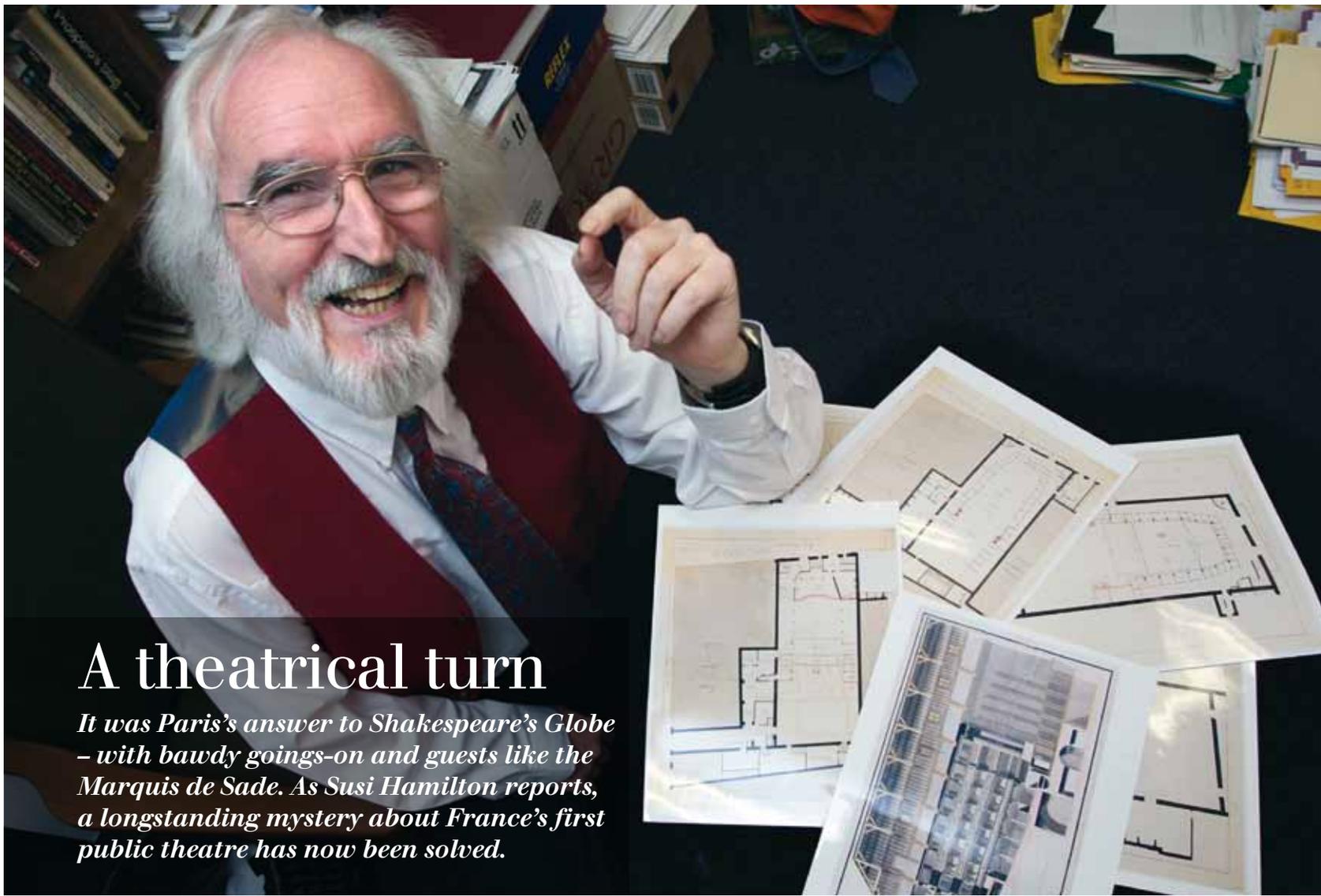
Major sponsors of the third Project X: Art advisor Julian Beaumont, Faculty of Built Environment, COFA, Boral Timber, EDCON Steel, Stratco.

"The students have to work with different disciplines and personalities, which they'll need to do as professionals."



An interview with Julian Beaumont can be seen in the "Giving to UNSW" collection on UNSWTV www.tv.unsw.edu.au





A theatrical turn

It was Paris's answer to Shakespeare's Globe – with bawdy goings-on and guests like the Marquis de Sade. As Susi Hamilton reports, a longstanding mystery about France's first public theatre has now been solved.

Marie Antoinette and the Marquis de Sade were regular guests of the first French theatre in its heyday. There, they rubbed shoulders with the who's who of Parisienne society – royalty, writers, well-to-do businessmen – and courtesans.

Originally called the Hôtel de Bourgogne, it was built in 1548 and was the top ticket in town for 235 years, until it made way for a leather market and eventually, a road. The French theatre was a long narrow rectangle with the stage at one end.

“It was easier for many audience members to see one another than the stage,” says Dr John Golder, from UNSW's School of English, Media and Performing Arts, who has just published a landmark paper, together with a series of architect's drawings, that shed new light on the venue.

“It was a social meeting place,” he explains of the building, which for nearly 100 years was the only custom-built public theatre in France. “People went to see and be seen. Indeed, the most privileged male patrons were allowed to sit on the stage.”

Correspondence shows many men came to visit their mistresses and courtesans at the theatre. Seductions took place in private theatre boxes, which were hired annually and

could be designed to a client's liking (often with screens for privacy).

“While much is known about what happened there, precise details of the theatre, its backstage facilities and outbuildings have remained a matter of conjecture,” says Dr Golder, who has been studying this theatre – amongst others – for over 40 years.

Ten years ago, and quite by chance, Dr Golder made an astonishing discovery. Working in the French National Archives on a different theatre altogether, he was brought a portfolio of drawings that he hadn't requested. Unable to resist taking a look inside, he fell upon six drawings, five plans and a long section, all undated and unidentified. But Dr Golder recognised the old rectangular theatre immediately. The drawings were made by a Royal Household architect, Louis-Alexandre Girault, in 1760, when the actors finally removed the benches on which the onstage spectators sat.

“For me they were a kind of holy grail – the only precise detailed evidence that has ever come to light regarding this playhouse in its history. I just stood there, shaking with emotion.”

The drawings, and his essay on them, have just been published in a special issue of the *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, which Dr Golder was asked to edit.

While some of Golder's excitement is now being felt in scholarly circles, it is not shared by the owner of the shoe shop which now stands on the site once occupied by the theatre in the second arrondissement.

A couple of years ago, assuming there might still be evidence of the huge cellarage area where scenery and stage machinery had once been stored, I approached the owner of a nearby café, says Dr Golder. He explained that there were cellars like those clearly marked on several of the drawings under his café, and almost certainly under the shoe shop.

The owner of the shoe shop, while confirming the existence of the cellars, maintained that they were full of shoes and inaccessible.

“His interest in theatre history was on a par with his preparedness to accommodate this troublesome academic from Australia: he had neither,” says Golder.

“Who knows what the future holds, but for the moment it is unlikely that Paris will ever be able to do for the Hôtel de Bourgogne what London has done for Shakespeare's Rose, Globe and Theatre by excavating the site and resuscitating France's first public playhouse,” he opines, wistfully. •

Up close and personal

Face-to-face contact and design are front and centre in a fresh approach to engineering. Peter Trute reports.

Something seriously cool is happening in the Faculty of Engineering.

Bold green walls, orange designer armchairs and wide, communal work tables now dominate the fifth floor of the Mechanical Engineering building. It's the type of studio generally associated with hip advertising or web design companies.

The space was definitely built to foster collaborative creativity but the students won't be advertising types: they'll be the next generation of Australia's engineers.

Design@Eng, as UNSW's newest collaborative workspace is known, is the culmination of a sustained effort by Dean of Engineering Professor Graham Davies, former Dean of Engineering Professor Brendon Parker, and senior lecturer and Director of Design@Eng, Dr Carl Reidsema, to make design a central tenet of engineering education.

Design@Eng contains a flexible learning studio, a digital design research laboratory, an informal student learning space and conference facilities, giving students a learning environment custom-built for honing the communication and collaboration skills they will need when they enter the workforce.

Gaming entrepreneur Len Ainsworth made a substantial donation towards the new facility after hearing of the plans.

Mr Ainsworth, the chairman of the internationally successful Ainsworth Game Technology, explained at the space's official opening why he was so enthusiastic about backing the project. He said it was difficult to get engineers "who had some idea of the aesthetic side of design".

"Aesthetic design makes all the difference in the world to whether someone will buy a product, not to mention that a well-designed product will cost you less to make," said Mr Ainsworth.

Professor Davies, who oversaw the creation of a Design Centre in his previous post as Dean of Engineering at the University of Birmingham, said teaching in a less formal environment was becoming more important in developing aesthetic and teamwork skills.

"This facility allows us to teach in a much more interactive way and our industry partners are ecstatic that we have such a space," he said.

Professor Parker, who initiated the focus on design during his time as Dean with a course for first-year students, requiring them to design and build a solution to an engineering problem, said Design@Eng re-created "what you would find in a modern industrial design office".

"Many years ago engineers had drawing offices – these served as spaces for discussion and collaboration. Then the drawing boards were thrown away and replaced with computers and we realised that we had lost something, so we're trying to bring those spaces back," he said.

Dr Reidsema, a keen advocate of design-centred engineering education, has an Australian Learning and Teaching Council grant to investigate how to reform engineering education in Australia.

"Design is often referred to as something intrinsic to engineers but good design is more than an isolated act – it's developed in response to complex technical and social problems and we can develop that sensibility in the Design@Eng environment," he said.

In 2009 Dr Reidsema began a new course for fourth-year students, which requires them to work in teams under real-world time and budget restrictions to solve genuine design problems for industry partners, among them Railcorp and Victa.

Some of the solutions developed by the students have been adopted by the companies involved, and participants in the course will now use the Design@Eng studios and conference room to thrash out ideas and present them to industry executives.

In keeping with the interdisciplinary nature of the facility, students from the College of Fine Arts and the Faculty of Built Environment (FBE) – including those participating in the Project X design workshop (see story on page 14) – will also use Design@Eng.

FBE senior lecturer in architecture, Russell Lowe, said Design@Eng created an opportunity for PhD students "to socialise and collaborate with expansive thinkers from across Engineering and COFA".

"This is a high-performance space that will lift design collaboration and theory to another level," he said. •





A different perspective ... students Julia Langton and Adrian Allen with Psychology clinic director Alice Shires

A psychological approach

Members of the University and wider communities can benefit from high-quality, cost-effective clinical psychological therapy – all while doing a good turn themselves. Mary Azzi reports.

On an unassuming floor of offices hidden on UNSW's upper campus, students are tackling some of the biggest psychological issues of our time – including depression, anxiety and trauma.

But the issues are not the students' own. They are doing their bit to ease the struggles of individuals and families as part of the School of Psychology's clinical training program. The program offers affordable treatment provided by some of UNSW's top psychology students.

The Psychology clinic's director Alice Shires says the service is designed to do two things: offer valuable training opportunities for clinical psychology students who have obtained excellent honours marks and offer a high-quality service to the community.

"We offer adult psychological therapy, childhood therapy, adult neuro-psychology assessments, childhood cognitive assessments and child group work.

"We're open to anyone really; the general public, university students and university staff," she says.

"We get a lot of general practitioners, psychiatrists and other medical professionals referring people onto us. They are really happy to get such high-quality care for their patients and for such a low cost.

"Of course, the students also benefit from the real-world experience in the clinic – so

everyone wins," she says.

Under supervision from UNSW professional clinical psychologists and academics with long histories of working in practice, the students apply evidence-based therapy to their practice – an approach that integrates quality research into practical clinical training. While on occasion a supervisor may sit in on a consultation with a client, they may also review tapes recorded of the session or discuss some of the issues raised afterwards.

"These skills and strategies that clinical psychologists bring to bear have proven to be more effective than medication in treating high-prevalence disorders such as anxiety," says Scientia Professor Richard Bryant, who is also a Clinical Psychology course staff member.

And the need for education has never been greater: the World Health Organization predicts that by 2020, depression will be the second most burdensome disease on society, behind heart disease.

Adrian Allen and Julia Langton are two students undertaking training through the program while completing their postgraduate studies.

Working in the corporate world before deciding to undertake his degree in clinical psychology, Adrian swapped the suit, tie and briefcase for a more meaningful endeavour.

One challenge he describes is struggling with the real-world ethical dilemmas that are thrown up in the course of their training.

"The very personal nature of the work involves dealing with the legislative bounds of confidentiality day after day.

"You often need to use judgement and experience to steer your way through a dilemma so that the rights and interests of those involved are always maintained," says Adrian.

Despite widespread societal awareness of psychological conditions, there remains a negative stigma associated with anxiety and depression.

"I think it's much easier to tell people that you have a broken arm or even cancer than depression for fear of being branded lazy or selfish," says Julia.

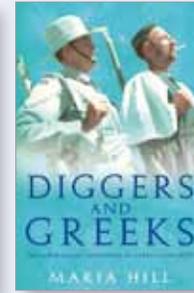
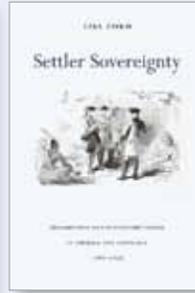
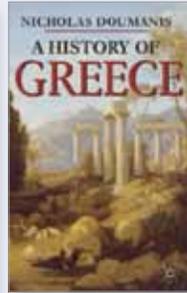
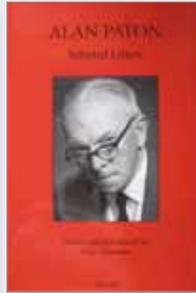
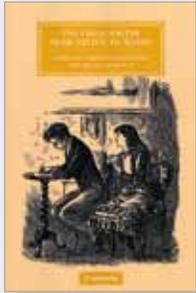
"It's such a fascinating area because of the individual differences between clients and I think it's important that we do our bit to help." •

The clinic can be contacted on 9385 3042. It operates all year round with no waiting list. Therapy sessions are \$40 per hour and there is a concession and student rate of \$15.

Mary Azzi is a second-year student at UNSW and was an intern with the Office of Media and Communications.

New books by UNSW staff

A selection of titles that are hitting the bookshelves.



Editor: Professor Christine Alexander from the School of English, Media and Performing Arts
Title: *The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf*
 In this collection, the largely overlooked genre of childhood writings by major authors is explored. The earliest writings of authors, including Austen, Byron, Barrett, Charlotte and Branwell Brontë, Alcott, George Eliot, Ruskin, Carroll and Woolf, are fascinating in themselves and for the promise of greater works to come.

Publisher: Cambridge University Press. The book has also been published in Japanese by Sairyusha.

Author: Professor Peter Alexander from the School of English, Media and the Performing Arts
Title: *Alan Paton's Selected Letters*
 Professor Alexander has spent several years working on the famous South African novelist, poet, prison governor, and political leader, Alan Paton. This is the first publication of Paton's letters, about 7000 of which survive in private and public collections.

Publisher: Van Riebeeck Society

Author: Dr Nicholas Doumanis from the School of History and Philosophy
Title: *A History of Greece*.

Taking a transnational approach, Doumanis argues that the resilience of Greek culture has a great deal to do with its continual interaction with other cultures throughout the centuries.

Publisher: Palgrave Macmillan

Author: Dr Lisa Ford in the School of History and Philosophy

Title: *Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia, 1788 – 1836 synopsis*.

In this award-winning book, Lisa Ford argues that modern settler sovereignty emerged when settlers in North America and Australia defined Indigenous theft and violence as crime. This occurred in the second quarter of the nineteenth century when notions of statehood, sovereignty, empire, and civilization were in rapid, global flux.

Publisher: Harvard University Press

Co-author: Donna Green from the Climate Change Research Centre (with journalist Liz Minchin)

Title: *Screw Light Bulbs*

This book delivers straight answers to questions such as: Should we stop eating chocolate for the good of the planet? Why should we think twice about our shopping choices? And what's the real story behind Australia's light bulb ban? It uses examples to show how Australia could deliver better-run services that would save us time, money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Publisher: UWA Publishing, April

Author: Dr Maria Hill, Visting Fellow at UNSW@ADFA

Title: *Diggers and Greeks: The Australian Campaigns in Greece and Crete*

In 1941 Australia sent its troops to Greece to help its allies fight the Germans in what proved to be a suicidal mission. Yet little is known about the mission and its failure. This book is an account of why the Greek people risked death to help their allies, and proves that it is possible to form successful relations with people of a different culture in conflict situations.

Publisher: UNSW Press, March.

Co-authors: Associate Professor Shirley Scott and Dr Anthony Billingsley, both from the School of Social Sciences and International Studies and Christopher Michaelsen, Convenor, International Law and Policy Group in UNSW's Faculty of Law

Title: *International Law and the Use of Force*
 The book brings to life a crucial body of law, explaining its historical origins, the core rules and principles of the regime embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, and contentious aspects of that law in the contemporary world.

Publisher: Praeger Security International

Author: Associate Professor Ed Sheer from the School of English, Media and Performing Arts

Title: *The Infinity Machine*

Ed Sheer has written about one Australia's most important visual artists, Mike Parr. This study of Parr's performance art is the first comprehensive account of this vital aspect of the artist's practice.

Publisher: Schwartz City Press

Suggestions for new books to include in the next edition of *Uniken* should be sent to uniken@unsw.edu.au by 15 April. Please include the date of publication.

Diary

22 March – Campus Living Village launch

22 March – Opening of submissions for the 2010 UNSW Inventor Awards. The awards carry a cash prize pool of \$28,000 and are open to UNSW academics and students who are commercialising their research with NewSouth Innovations. More details: www.nsinnovations.com.au

25 March – Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences' So, What? Lecture – Power and Love: A Theory and Practice of Social Change – Adam Kahane, International expert on dialogue and social change. RSVP to 9585 8512 or so.what@unsw.edu.au

26 March – Brien Holden Lecture Series: Discovery, Translation and Public Good: the Pathway to Eliminating Vision Impairment
 RSVP to 9585 7252

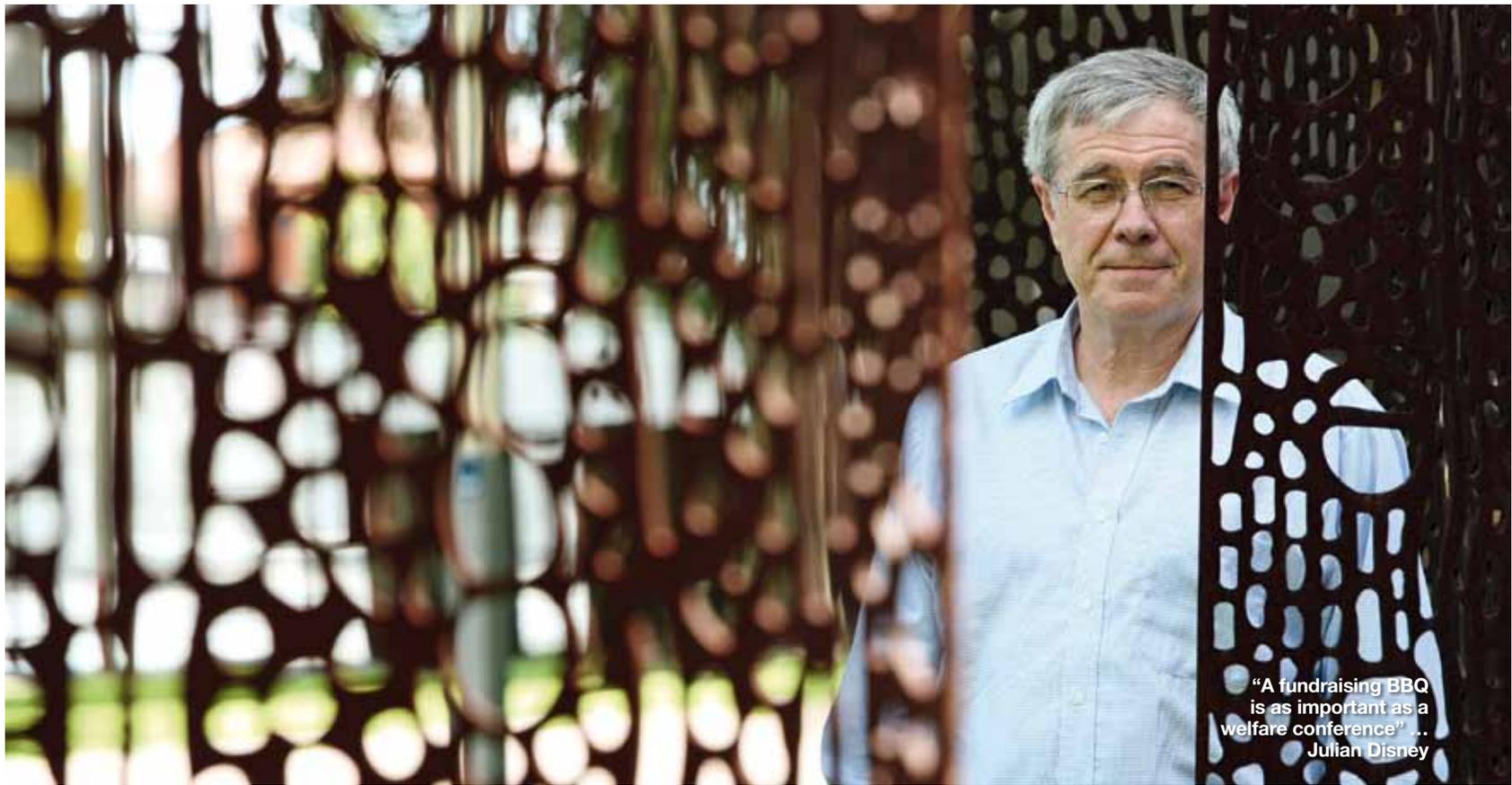
15 April – Author David Malouf is the guest of UNSWWriting. RSVP to UNSWriting@unsw.edu.au

19 April – The Australian School of Business (ASB) launches its own journal on the online portal Knowledge@Wharton. It is the only Australian business school to have such a link with the prestigious US business school.

April 20 – Meet the CEO hosted by the Australian School of Business with Mike Smith from ANZ

20 May – Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences' So, What? Lecture – Eileen Pittaway, Centre for Refugee Research, UNSW. RSVP to 9585 8512 or so.what@unsw.edu.au

28 May – Launch of the Lowy Cancer Research Centre



“A fundraising BBQ
is as important as a
welfare conference” ..
Julian Disney

5:00 minutes with ... Professor Julian Disney

Director of UNSW’s Social Justice Project

To say that law lecturer Julian Disney has a grassroots approach to social justice is something of an understatement.

Almost eight years ago he instigated Anti-Poverty Week as an extension of the UN’s annual anti-poverty day. It started with four activities on the UNSW campus in 2002 and expanded to 400 activities Australia-wide last year.

“The aim was to have a week, rather than only one day, that wasn’t just about preaching politics but gave communities the opportunity to say what they needed,” he says. “A fundraising sausage sizzle in a car park is as important to the week as a national welfare conference in Canberra.”

This determination is typical of this social activist and legal academic, who has spent his career using his legal, political and economic expertise in supporting those Australians neglected by public policy and decision-making.

The unemployed, sole parents, people with disabilities, aged pensioners and other low-income earners are just some of those assisted by UNSW’s Social Justice Project and through Julian’s work as National Chair of Anti-Poverty Week. He also chairs the National Affordable Housing Summit and the Community Tax Forum, which represent community organisations across Australia concerned about social justice.

Julian seems to be able to sniff out injustice

in any aspect of society. He believes this trait may have been inherited from his parents.

“My father died when I was 14 but I remember his strong commitment to fairness, and my mother was the head of the first Australian citizens’ advice bureau.”

As well as continuing his social justice work, Julian was recently appointed chair of the Australian Press Council, which works to improve the independence and standards of the print media.

“A good education helps, but many need much more.”

“The good and the bad performance of the media has, in my view, a big impact on public policy and I’ve been given the opportunity to contribute to this important issue – so I’m going to give it a go.

What’s your earliest memory?

Stepping off a footpath in England when I was about four and forgetting what I wanted to say. It’s a very clear memory of forgetting, if that makes sense.

What’s your most treasured possession?

I thought about this during the Victorian bushfires – it would have to be photos, letters and a few other written records.

Some things that people might not know about me ...

I was signed up by a professional Australian Rules football club. I love wandering around nurseries looking at plants, and my musical

taste is so bizarre that I like both Abba and Janis Joplin.

What’s your favourite song to dance to?

If I still danced it would be reggae, especially Jimmy Cliff and Bob Marley. Maybe it’s because my mother was born and brought up in Jamaica.

My last meal would be ...

Freshly caught Kangaroo Island whiting with a very cold beer.

A book that influenced my life ...

An obscure book, *Justice in a Depressed Area*, written by a lawyer from the mining districts of England in the depths of the Depression. My godmother gave it to me when I was 23 and it was my first, and still too rare, experience of a senior lawyer frankly and forcefully explaining some of the many ways in which the legal system can aggravate unfairness and hardship for low-income people.

What has inspired/motivated you the most?

It’s corny to say, but I think if you’ve been lucky with what you’ve got, you should spend some time trying to help people who are less lucky. I don’t argue for total equality because that can involve too much conformity, but I think people should be given a fair go and there should be adequate protection for people who can’t escape hardship. Politicians often speak as if all you need is to give people a good education. That helps but many need much more. *

Professor Disney spoke with Fran Strachan.

Name: Dr Loretta Dobrescu

Position: Economics lecturer

Faculty: Australian School of Business (ASB)

Research: I am about to start an extensive study of Australia's ageing population to see what factors affect the economic decisions, longevity and health. I have recently joined UNSW after my PhD in the US and Italy, and will work closely with the ASB's Australian Institute for Population Research (AIPAR).

I have already worked on the first comprehensive study of ageing in Europe, where I found that single retired people in southern Europe, who have strong links with their families, are more likely to have higher life expectancies than single retired people in northern Europe, where family ties are looser. But southern Europeans were also more likely to get sick. Family cohesion – the strength of family ties – rises with age and it decreases with wealth. Family cohesion among poor people is greater than among the rich.

Inspiration: Economics can be very dry, so I decided to use my training to develop a dataset that helps measure both social and economic issues for the elderly. Ageing is an important emergency issue so we need to document the problems and come up with solutions pretty soon if we want to prevent their consequences. Society is growing old, and old people face various health shocks and medical spending risks. In the study, we will ask elderly people about their health-related issues, plus get an objective medical assessment of them. We will also ask people about their investments, housing, spending on food and services, social interactions and life satisfaction, amongst other things. From this we will be able to tell how prepared people are for different life events and how we can better prepare for the future generations who will be facing similar issues. How we contain these costs is the crucial economic question of this century – and a matter of pressing social significance. •

Dr Dobrescu spoke with Helen Pitt.