

GradLife



Sydney Water flows with UWS Alumni

inside

NEW VICE-CHANCELLOR

shares his vision for the future of the University of Western Sydney

FINDING GREENER PASTURES

The grass of farm life was most definitely greener for Sarah Parker

LEAVING BEHIND A LEGACY

Professor Michael Jeffery's legacy of environmental law leadership lives on

CELEBRATING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Liam Benson explores Australian culture and identity in a very unique way

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The University of Western Sydney has a rich history of connection with the natural environment, beginning with UWS Hawkesbury's heritage as Hawkesbury Agricultural College and now continuing with the Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment, conducting leading-edge research into climate change. In this issue, we profile a UWS graduate who has forged a career in this field. Sarah Parker made a career change, studying a Master of Agriculture and Rural Development at UWS so she and her husband could realise their dream of running a dairy farm. Sarah has also taken on leadership roles in the dairy industry, and she shares some insights into country life.

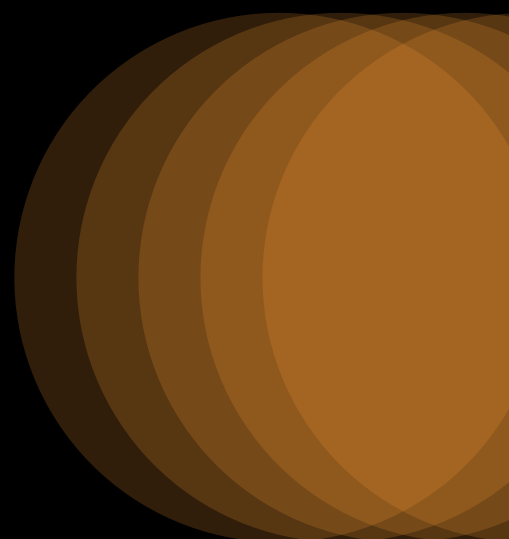
The reputation of UWS in the field of environmental law has grown in recent years, in large part due to the academic leadership shown by the late Professor Michael Jeffery QC, former Professor of Environmental Law in the School of Law who passed away in July. An accomplished lawyer, Professor Jeffery was one of the youngest Canadians to be appointed Queen's Counsel in 1978 before going on to make his mark in international and comparative environmental law, sustainability and climate change.

Professor Jeffery joined the UWS School of Law in 2008, where he was a highly regarded teacher and researcher, and leader of the Environmental and Sustainability research cluster. Professor Jeffery's reputation for academic excellence and providing supportive caring supervision, together with colleague Professor Donna Craig, attracted PhD candidates from Kenya, China, India and Bangladesh to UWS. As the University mourns his passing, Professor Jeffery's legacy can be seen in the graduates who are now taking their newfound expertise back to their countries of origin, some of which face significant environmental challenges.

2013 marks my final year at UWS, as I am retiring from my position as Vice-Chancellor after 16 years. It has been a great privilege and a joy to lead UWS during a time of such dynamic transformation and growth. I welcome the appointment of Professor Barney Glover, currently Vice-Chancellor of Charles Darwin University, as the new Vice-Chancellor and President of UWS. This edition includes a profile of Professor Glover, who shares our vision of UWS as a high quality, open institution. I am confident that the University will be in very good hands, and I look forward to watching its development and that of our graduates in future years.

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Sydney Water catchment

Sydney Water is Australia's largest water utility, providing drinking water, recycled water, wastewater services and some stormwater services to over four million customers in Sydney, the Illawarra and the Blue Mountains. Every day, it supplies about 1.4 billion litres of water to its customers.

Considering Sydney Water's head office is located in the epicentre of Sydney's western suburbs at Parramatta, it's no wonder that it has accumulated a number of University of Western Sydney alumni as staff over the years. But what is more surprising is the diverse range of fields UWS graduates have come from, all finding their professional home at Sydney Water.

"Sydney Water has recruited many UWS graduates over the years and more recently engaged in a scholarship with UWS," says Sarah McGahen, Manager, Entry Level Programs, People, Leadership and Culture, Sydney Water.

The company is committed to working closely with local universities as a way to source top graduates in the future, she added.

Here is a sample of the UWS alumni now working at Sydney Water:

**James Hamilton, Manager,
Planning and Governance,
Finance and Corporate Services**



In his eighth year working for Sydney Water, James has high praise for his employer.



"Sydney Water has provided me with the opportunity to work in a variety of roles and on a variety of projects. I consider myself lucky to work with great people that have a clear sense of purpose," he says.

Before joining the company in 2006, the [Bachelor of Commerce \(Accounting\)](#) graduate, who completed his studies in 1994, had plenty of experience in the workforce, including a number of years working in the UK and Europe.

When he returned to Australia, James worked for a global IT services firm for a number of years before joining Sydney Water, where he became the Project Controls Manager for Sydney's Desalination Project.

"Being the type of person who's generally up for a challenge, I explored the opportunity and decided to make the leap. It ended up being a great decision," he says.

James now works in a team that audits major project business cases for Sydney Water's capital works program.

"We verify the prudence, efficiency and robustness of investment proposals, and make recommendations accordingly. It's an interesting and varied role, as the proposals cover every facet of what is a very large business," he says.

James is a self-described advocate of UWS. Whilst completing the CPA Program, he was a part-time tutor in accounting at the University, and later obtained a postgraduate degree in Information Technology. James is now actively involved in a number of volunteer UWS alumni activities, and was recently presented an award for his contributions.

"I've worked with many UWS graduates over the years, both locally and overseas, and there's a real camaraderie amongst us. Quite simply I wouldn't be where I am without having studied at UWS," he says.

**Jeanine Avery, Business Systems
Analyst, Management Accounting**



Unlike her fellow alumni, Jeanine commenced working at Sydney Water prior to starting her degree at UWS.

"It was while working in a Human Resources role that I decided to commence a [Bachelor of Commerce](#) degree, initially with a major in Industrial Relations," she recalls.

"When I decided to switch my major to Accounting, I was able to gain experience in accounting work at Sydney Water and eventually secure a position in the accounting field once I completed my degree."

She's since traversed many different roles within the company, first as a management accountant in 1996, then as a financial analyst for the Asset Management Division in 2000, and most recently as a business systems analyst, where since 2006 she has been responsible for managing the financial budget and forecast modelling system for Finance and Corporate Services.

"The best thing about my job is having the opportunity to work on challenging system development and business improvement projects to meet changing business needs," she says.

"In the past few years, I have moved into more of an IT role and feel my degree at UWS has been invaluable in helping me transition through these different business roles."

Vicky Rodriguez, Purchasing Officer



After graduating with a [Graduate Diploma in Accounting](#) from UWS in 2006, Vicky started applying for jobs like many new graduates, but her end-goal was always to work for a public organisation.

"I went to a recruitment agency and explained my aspirations and what kind of job I wanted. It's important to know what you want so you can find the people that can help you to achieve your goals," she says.

She started working with Sydney Water in 2007 as an administration officer on a contract basis, and during this time "realised Sydney Water is a great company to work for".

After two years working as a contractor, Vicky was successful in gaining a permanent position as a purchasing officer, and the organisation has supported her in continuing to improve her skills and knowledge.

"I had the opportunity to take on an acting role as a contract payable officer for six months. Soon after, I had an acting role as a Chairman of the Tender Board for one month, then as an acting assistant accountant for nine months," she says.

"During all this time I have learnt so much and I am still enthusiastic about learning and improving my skills."

Peter Byrne, Senior Project Manager, Group Property



After a varied and successful career in the property world, including working as a part-time TAFE teacher for 20 years and holding a number of property-based government positions, Peter was seeking a career change, and so joined Sydney Water in 2006.

"I'm presently engaged as a senior project manager with Sydney Water's Group Property team, where I coordinate a number of activities associated with the acquisition of property and disposal of surplus property, together with undertaking ad hoc property-based projects," he says.

The fact that no two projects – or properties – are the same keeps Peter's job interesting. His work consistently throws up new challenges which maintains his enthusiasm, as well as adding to his knowledge and skills.

"Sydney Water's property portfolio is extremely diverse, providing for a wide and varied range of tasks and activities over all classes of property requiring not only theoretical knowledge, but direct application of practical experience," Peter says.

His foray into property really took off when he enrolled in Hawkesbury Agricultural College's (now UWS Hawkesbury) [Bachelor of Business \(Land Economy\)](#) in 1987, after completing a number of TAFE real estate and property courses.

This was without question the best thing he could have done for the advancement in his career, he says.

"I found that HAC's sound reputation for academic excellence was reflected in the course material, which apart from being interesting, provided me with the foundation to progress in my career."

Chris Moore, Senior Analyst, Servicing and Asset Strategy, Liveable Cities Solutions



In early 1999, Chris spotted a newspaper advertisement for a position in the water industry, which had been an interest he cultivated during his time at UWS, where he studied a [Bachelor of Civil Engineering](#).

With a successful application, Chris joined the Sydney Water Graduate Program in April that year. The next four years were spent rotating through a number of areas such as operations, project management, system planning and strategy programs.

"At the start there was a lot of fieldwork, and gaining knowledge about how the water system worked. This real-world experience taught me that the world is not perfect, which comes in handy when looking at the big strategic picture of Sydney," Chris says.

His work as a senior analyst requires him to take this big picture and identify opportunities up to 30 years in the future.

"Our team looks at the portfolio of assets such as pumping stations, treatment plants, reservoirs and pipes, tries to understand the life expectancy and determine maintenance strategies of when it is optimal to renew these assets," he says.

"At the moment we're developing quantitative risk methods and economic evaluation tools to determine where to spend money wisely in the system to improve reliability, availability and resilience."

Chris says the best thing about his job is being able to use his engineering skills to improve the water supply for Greater Metropolitan Sydney.

"Sydney's water supply has an amazing history of engineering infrastructure. I'm now a part of that history."

New Vice-Chancellor looks to the future

A new era begins for the University of Western Sydney on 1 January 2014 when Professor Barney Glover commences as Vice-Chancellor and President of UWS.

Professor Glover takes on the role from retiring Vice-Chancellor, Professor Janice Reid AM, who has led UWS for almost 16 years.

Currently Vice-Chancellor of Charles Darwin University (CDU) in the Northern Territory, Professor Glover has forged a long career as a mathematician, educator and senior academic leader.

He grew up in Geelong in Victoria, and graduated from the University of Melbourne with a Bachelor of Science, Honours, Diploma of Education, Master of Science, and PhD in Mathematics.

"I was a secondary teacher for about seven years, and had a great period as my young children were growing up, teaching in Cobram and Horsham in country Victoria," Professor Glover says.

Ready to return to academic life, he became a Lecturer in Mathematics at the University of Ballarat, before crossing Australia to Curtin University of Technology in Perth, where he served as Director and then Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Development). Prior to becoming Vice-Chancellor of CDU, he was Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) at the University of Newcastle.

"I have been in education all my life, so I have a great appreciation of the importance of pathways to higher education. While I have been in the Northern Territory, I have been particularly interested in how we can assist Indigenous Australians to have successful pathways to higher education," Professor Glover says.

Having lived and worked in regional Australia in various states, Professor Glover also has a special interest in regional engagement,

and this was one of the factors that attracted him to the role at UWS.

"The University of Western Sydney is very closely connected with its region, and it is a university that is very well-known and highly regarded for its engagement strategy with the community. That's been a very important part of my role in the Northern Territory, to strengthen linkages between our academic areas and the community broadly. That, to my mind, is a very important part of the role a university plays in a community and regional context," he says.

"I am looking forward to the challenges of leading another dynamic and impressive Australian university. It's a great honour to lead any Australian university, and it will certainly be a great honour to lead a university as prominent as the University of Western Sydney."

UWS Chancellor, Professor Peter Shergold AC, says UWS should feel incredibly fortunate.

"UWS has for many years enjoyed the leadership of one of Australia's great Vice-Chancellors, Janice Reid. Now Barney Glover, who shares our vision for UWS as a high quality but open institution, will oversee our continuing growth and development," says Professor Shergold.

"I have no doubt that Barney's experience, energy and enthusiasm will be directed towards continuing to develop further the excellence of our teaching, building our research capacity and performance, and significantly enhancing the strength of our engagement with businesses and the communities of Greater Western Sydney. Jan and Barney share a

commitment to providing the best and most engaging university experience for our students and to making a difference in the lives of the people in our region."

Professor Reid has warmly welcomed the appointment of Professor Glover.

"It has been a great privilege and a joy to lead UWS during a time of such dynamic transformation and growth. The University will be in very good hands with Barney. He is an accomplished leader who exemplifies the values that are at the heart of this fine University and has the knowledge and experience to lead UWS in the next phase of its development," says Professor Reid.

Looking to the future, Professor Glover says there are three important areas he is keen to work on with the University's staff and the broader Western Sydney region.

"One is to continue to strengthen its links with the community and particularly with business, industry and the commercial sector of Western Sydney, through everything from research linkages and work-integrated learning opportunities to pathways to employment, and the way our graduates are accepted into the employment market in Western Sydney," he says.

Developing the research strengths of the University will also be a priority.

"The University's international profile depends on the quality of its research activity and outcomes. There are some great indicators of the strength of the University of Western Sydney in a number of parts of the organisation, and I think that a lot more can be done to strengthen and grow research more broadly," he says.



"I believe the way of the future is really around technology and how it can transform educational opportunity – whether that is in an on-campus context of technology-enriched learning, or in fact moving into online education in a significant way." – Professor Barney Glover

Professor Glover is also a leader in the development of flexible, technology-based learning, and continuing to drive this area forward at UWS is another priority.

"I believe the way of the future is really around technology and how it can transform educational opportunity – whether that is in an on-campus context of technology-enriched learning, or in fact moving into online education in a significant way.

"Of course, on top of all of that, I will be working to ensure the University continues the great legacy of Jan Reid, who has been a wonderful vice-chancellor. She's been greatly supported by the Board of Trustees, and the University is very well-placed for the future."

When he takes up his role, Professor Glover also looks forward to connecting with UWS alumni, both locally and overseas.

"Throughout my career as an academic and senior manager of an Australian university, I have been heavily involved in international outreach, and I really look forward to meeting up with the international alumni around the world, and ensuring that they are kept well-informed of the exciting things happening at the University well into the future."

Michael O'Donnell
Bachelor of Business (Accounting) (1991)
Master of Commerce (Accounting) (1993)
Bachelor of Laws (1994)



Crunching numbers for an electronics giant

Working for one of the largest electronic producers in the world definitely has its perks, and because he is the Finance Director for Panasonic Australia, Michael O'Donnell gets to learn about the latest technological developments first-hand.

At the end of this year Michael will have reached an impressive 13 years working for the company, and it's not just the products that have kept him there all this time.

Michael graduated with a Bachelor of Business (Accounting) from UWS in 1991 and completed a Master of Commerce (Accounting) in 1993, also from UWS.

His finance role isn't what you would call typical, but encompasses much broader areas of the business, such as legal and environment.

"Environment is one of the hot topics these days. The development of low energy usage products, the use of recycled materials in products and the avoidance of the use of such materials in manufacturing are all examples of environmental considerations," he says.

"Further to that, the end-of-life recycling of products such as TVs and computers is very important to ensure that the impact on the environment is limited."

On the finance side, during his time at Panasonic, Michael has had the opportunity to take on a varied range of responsibilities – at times looking

after IT, supply chain and a number of restructures in the organisation.

"I get involved in a lot of activities as Finance Director which keeps you very interested, and it's always good to see the company developing to meet customer needs," he says.

"Panasonic is a Japanese company, so the culture is different, the style is different and it's a large company with lots of products so there's always something happening."

Michael says one of the best aspects of his job is the people he works with.

"I have a good team – they always look after me and I try to look after them as well. We have got a good cross-section of skills and a positive commitment to ensuring equal opportunity for men and women."

After graduating from UWS, Michael worked in the supply chain area before moving on to an Assistant Accountant position and then becoming a Finance Controller for an international IT company. But when the company was acquired by Samsung, he was made redundant.

After doing some contracting work, Michael was successful in gaining a

position at Panasonic in 2001, first as the General Manager of Finance before being promoted to Finance Director in 2005.

"The role was previously held by a Japanese expat, but was converted to a local representation in 2005, so he left and I have been here since," he says.

Michael's interest in the legal profession saw him return to UWS to study for a postgraduate law degree, which he received in 2003. He now undertakes internal legal work for Panasonic as well.

And his thirst for education hasn't abated – next year Michael plans to go back to UWS to study a legal diploma course, so he can get his practicing certificate and open the door to a second career.

"I have a keen interest in the law. In my older years I would probably prefer to practice law rather than continue with the financial career, so I'll look at doing some legal work or working in a small firm in the next few years."

For information on postgraduate business courses visit:
uws.edu.au/pgbusinesscourses

Taking inspiration from Thai art



Andrew West
Bachelor of Arts (Applied Communication) (1989)
Master of Arts (Creative Writing) (1996)
Photo taken by Maximilian Westphal

Considering he went to UWS by chance, Bangkok-based art critic Andrew J. West never expected the University to have such a huge impact on his life.

But there's no denying it has shaped his future. UWS was where his passion for Thai art was first ignited, connecting him to a country that would allow him to pursue his dream and build a successful career as a writer and artist.

Andrew studied a Bachelor of Communications, although most of his friends at the University were studying visual arts and performing arts.

"From those friendships I became more interested in visual arts, and I met a lot of students and teachers from Thailand's Silpakorn University, a sister university to UWS," he says.

Andrew graduated from UWS in 1989, and over the following years made many trips to Thailand to visit his friends.

It was a tough time for journalism in Australia; the recession was in full swing and although Andrew procured a couple of journalistic type roles, nothing really stuck. He went back to UWS to do a Master of Arts in Creative Writing, but the job opportunities remained elusive.

"I came to Thailand more and more to visit and kept staying longer. Eventually I moved here eight years after I graduated from my MA," he says.

What Australia couldn't offer him in the form of employment, Thailand offered Andrew in abundance.

"I really couldn't use my skills in Australia. There was no opportunity for me to really do what I do best. But I was lucky enough to have these contacts here where I could apply my skills."

Since moving to Thailand in 2003, Andrew has had hundreds of pieces of work published, including in *Bangkok Post*, and he is now a contributing editor for *Photo Art Magazine*.

An MA is the basic university teaching qualification in Thailand, and Andrew has been teaching for eight years, the last three at the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), and has guest lectured in art criticism at Silpakorn University.

"I try to model how I teach on teachers at UWS, particularly one teacher, Peter McGregor, who had a big influence on me. His style of teaching is what I try to emulate."

He has also written three books including an art fiction novel, *Silpa: the Art of Love*, which was published in 2008, and two non-fiction art books that are set to be published: *Prateep Kochabua: Destiny to Imagination*, which will be launched on 13 September 2013 and the *Contemporary Thai Directory of Artists*, which will be published later this year.

His foray into book writing has been challenging, Andrew says, and his next book, which he's working on now and which will appear next year, is taking a long time and a great deal of research.

"It's disciplined and hard work, but it's rewarding and enjoyable as well. You're writing about artists and describing pieces of art, it's very creative."

In another exciting career development, Andrew will turn from art critic to the

critiqued at his first exhibition, *Three Worlds*, which launches on 18 January 2014 at Bangkok Art and Culture Centre (BACC), "the Guggenheim of Thailand".

For the forthcoming exhibition, which is sponsored by Thailand's Ministry of Culture, Andrew has taken 27 photographs of Thai artists with their artworks and written a poem about each one.

"The photographs are framed and across each frame is plexiglass. I am writing on the plexiglass in white marker, so the poem interacts with the photograph," he says.

The idea came to him when he was writing the *Contemporary Thai Directory of Artists*.

"I was thinking, how can I support the book, and how can I capitalise on that because I hope that's going to be a very significant book that is going to be able to help people learn about Thai art."

Andrew loves the hectic hustle and bustle of Bangkok, and well and truly calls Thailand his home. He encourages graduates to look outside of Australia if they are struggling to gain a foothold in their industry.

"I would recommend to anyone who is graduating from UWS or any university that if you can't use your skills in Australia or you're not able to leverage yourself, go overseas. There are other places that need you."

Finding greener pastures

Moving from the bustling, fast-paced city to a new life in the country might be a dream for some people, but not for Sarah Parker. Almost 10 years ago, she and her husband decided the grass of farm life was most definitely greener and went about making their dream of owning and operating their own dairy farm a reality.

"My husband, Raymond, comes from a dairy farm originally and it was always a dream we wanted to achieve," she says.

Growing up in Brisbane meant Sarah knew next to nothing about farm life, so she decided to get herself a suitable education and completed a Master of Applied Science (Agriculture and Rural Development) at UWS.

Because she was living in Queensland and working full-time, Sarah had to spend one week a month on campus in Sydney.

Although the two years of studying was difficult, the course gave Sarah a chance to transfer her skills from the city to the country.

"Getting through the course on time was challenging, but it did allow me to achieve what my husband and I were working towards, which was to actually move to a rural area and start our own dairy farm," she says.

In 2004, the year she graduated, Sarah and Raymond took the plunge and moved to northern Victoria. They leased a dairy farm for two years, with the aim of buying their own property in five years' time, however, "we bought our current property within two years of moving during what turned out to be the worst drought on record," Sarah recalls with a laugh.

"We are still there on our dairy farm, 'Glenclyffe', which is a stud registered farm with Holstein and Illawarra cows."

As careers go, Sarah's could have taken a very different turn. Originally she studied in Queensland, which led her to a position in community development and children services working with youth at risk and people with disabilities.

"The best thing about the job was seeing people achieve things that they probably would never have achieved without assistance, providing direction and encouragement to teenagers to better themselves, and

assisting people with brain injury return to a normal life," she says.

Thanks to her studies at UWS, Sarah was able to continue working in a multitude of new positions when she moved to the country. Her first role was as the Projects and Development Coordinator for Melbourne University's Dookie Campus, which enabled her to expand her network in the agribusiness industry.

She jumped at every opportunity that came along, including helping to establish the Young Agribusiness Professionals group and being involved in Victorian Farmers' Federation and United Dairyfarmers of Victoria policy councils, the VCE Agriculture and Horticulture Curriculum Review Panel and Primary Skills Victoria. In conjunction with this work, she was also one of 10 people chosen to advise the Federal Minister for Agriculture.

In 2008, Sarah began working with Murray Dairy, a regional development arm of Dairy Australia, first as the Young Dairy Development Program Coordinator, where she was responsible for coordinating and delivering educational, capacity building and social networking events for over 400 young farmers and service providers across the region.

Making the industry better for young people was a major part of the role, and still remains one of Sarah's huge interests.

"That includes making better career pathways, improving the curriculum of agriculture in schools, promoting the pathways to young people as an option and creating a network for young people on farms so they don't feel so isolated," she says.

In 2009, she took up the role as CEO of Murray Dairy, which included liaising extensively with dairy farmers, industry organisations, service providers,

government and authorities to implement the Murray Dairy annual operating plan.

As CEO, Sarah saw some challenging times including two floods, a drought and a locust plague, but helping people through these crises was one of the most rewarding things about her role.

"One of the best things about the job was meeting the farmers, networking, enabling the industry and being able to help people grow their business and supporting them during challenging times," she says.

Retention and attraction of employees is one of the biggest challenges in the agriculture industry today. The issues farmers were dealing with were also issues she and her husband were facing on their own dairy farm, and Sarah says having this perspective provided great insight for her.

"Being aware of what's happening in the industry and understanding the implications for your business is a major challenge, so I suppose you could say that my qualification has helped our business adapt as the challenges arose," she says.

Sarah finished at Murray Dairy earlier this year to take some time out on the farm and pursue consultancy project management work.

The complementary skills Sarah and her husband Raymond have help them work well as a team.

"He manages the farm business and breeding and development of the livestock. I do all the administration with the accounts, reporting and finance side of things."

Having dreamt of country life, Sarah and Raymond have completely settled into their time on the farm, enjoying a great social circle filled with lovely people.

"Life is what you make of it and obviously we've used our skills to establish a business, but we are also part of various groups in our community and we probably contribute more to our community than what we did in the city."

“One of the best things about the job was meeting the farmers, networking, enabling the industry and being able to help people grow their business and supporting them during challenging times.” – Sarah Parker



Sarah Parker and husband Raymond
Master of Applied Science (Agriculture and Rural Development) (2004)
Photo taken by Tim Gentle



Professor Michael Jeffery

Professor Michael Jeffery's legacy of environmental law leadership

The University mourns the loss of Professor Michael Jeffery QC, who passed away in July in his home town of Calgary, Canada. A leader in the field of environmental law, Professor Jeffery shared his passion through teaching and supervision of PhD candidates, many of whom came to study at UWS from overseas. Some of his students here share their experiences and memories of their mentor.

A true veteran of international and comparative environmental law, sustainability and climate change, Professor Michael Jeffery QC's judicial, legal and academic experience spanned an impressive 40 years, going back to the earliest days of environmental law and the world's first Clean Air and Water Acts, enacted in the late 1960s.

Professor Jeffery was one of the youngest Canadians to be appointed Queen's Counsel in 1978 and pioneered the introduction of environmental impact assessments in Canada.

His passion for teaching the next generation of environmental law leaders brought him to Australia in September 1998, where he became the Dean of Law and Director of Macquarie University's Centre for Environmental Law, before joining the UWS School of Law in 2008 with his wife and fellow academic, Professor Donna Craig.

The reputation of Professors Jeffery and Craig as leaders in this field, as well as being experienced and caring supervisors, attracted environmental law protégés from China, Bangladesh, Kenya, Australia, Thailand, India and Iran to UWS.

In March 2013, they welcomed three new students – two from Bangladesh and one from Thailand – into their environmental law cohort, all of who chose UWS because of the stellar academic reputation of Professor Jeffery.

A major factor in the success of the environmental law PhD program, particularly as many students are studying away from their family and friends for extended periods, was that Professors Jeffery and Craig went above and beyond the normal supervisory relationship to create a family environment for the students, as Hem Aitken, who graduated last year, can attest.

"They have been a wonderful support and very encouraging, especially when one is away from family, friends and relatives. Apart from their cooperation in my studies, they also gave me away as their daughter on my wedding. They go out of their way to help their students, who they treat as no less than their children," she said.

Elizabeth Gachenga, who graduated in April this year, said this support was important to her success in the doctoral program.

"Apart from providing excellent support in the entire PhD process, they involved me in their personal research and brought all us students together as a 'family'. This helped me finish my thesis in good time," she said.

Elizabeth has since returned to Kenya, to take up a role as a Lecturer at Strathmore Law School in Nairobi.

"I am also involved in research and working towards creating a research centre in environmental law at the law school," she said. "My aspiration is to contribute to legal education in Kenya

and the East African region. I also look forward to contributing applied research in environmental law in Kenya."

Qi Gao also graduated in April and returned to China not long after for a round of job interviews, where she hoped to secure an academic position in a leading Chinese university.

At her graduation, she said: "It's a mixed feeling – on one hand you have to leave the place you've studied for three and a half years and I have lots of memories and lots of friends here, especially Michael and Donna. On the other hand it's time to start – I've never really worked before and I'm excited."

Professors Jeffery and Craig also helped their students to build their reputation in the field by co-authoring publications and introducing them to key colleagues in the area.

"They not only taught us by saying something, they did so by doing something. How they supervised together in their academic life will really have a long-term influence on me," Qi said.

Third year student, Xiangbai He, said it is Michael's amiable, frank, generous and considerate personality that will be remembered.

"Michael had a very sharp and keen insight and understanding about politics, law and social issues, and arguing and debating with him many times provided me with unique perspectives



and understanding, which was very helpful for my thesis writing,” she said.

“His determination, ambition and sense of humour will encourage me to face all the uncertainties and challenges in my future career and life.”

“He is a person with strong responsibility. Even before his passing, he still remembered our PhD students and entrusted Donna to take care of us. I feel grateful that I was once under the supervision of Michael and will continue to move on in academia with his earnest teachings.” – Ying Shen

Many of Professors Jeffery and Craig’s successful PhD candidates have already returned to their countries and are making a name for themselves in the environmental law academia and research space – an achievement that Professor Jeffery was extremely proud of.

Two students who received their doctorates in April 2012 have already obtained impressive positions in the field. Xiaobo Zhao secured a position as a Lecturer in the Law School at the Shanghai University of Finance and Economic (SHUFE) and is one of their up-and-coming young academics.

Closer to home, Jane Scanlon has been appointed Senior Manager, Sustainability and Climate Change at railway infrastructure firm RPS Group in Sydney. Her thesis subject presented significant employment opportunities, and her work

with the RPS has given her the chance to extend that knowledge in the field.

Professor Jeffery has no doubt passed on his passion and drive to his students as they gear up to tackle the major environmental issues the world is facing today, such as climate change, energy production, loss of biodiversity, international trade and human rights.

“I hope to find a position in a non-government organisation to realise my dream in environmental protection. It would also be great to get a position in the universities in

China, where I could influence the young generations,” said Xiangbai.

Madmudur Rahman, who started his PhD in March, looks forward to working with “the poor and vulnerable people of Bangladesh who have been suffering a lot due to climate change”, while Ying Shen, also a third year student, hopes to pursue research in the field of environmental law and climate change.

“I also want to work in a non-government organisation with regard to climate change,” she said. “I hope that my knowledge can boost sustainable development.”

Ying Shen said Michael continually brought her inspiration and new ideas for her thesis, but the most important thing he taught her was to do research independently.

“He is a person with strong responsibility. Even before his passing, he still remembered our PhD students and entrusted Donna to take care of us,” she said. “I feel grateful that I was once under the supervision of Michael and will continue to move on in academia with his earnest teachings.”

For information on environmental law please visit:
uws.edu.au/uglawcourses



Professor Kevin Dunn

Opinion Piece

Changing the world requires perception

By Professor Kevin Dunn, UWS School of Social Sciences and Psychology

My office on the Kingswood campus is less than two kilometres from where I went to high school, so I have perhaps more direct experience than some in the challenges faced in the urban environment of Sydney's Greater West.

I began at UWS in 2008 as Professor of Geography and Urban Studies, tasked with establishing a Geography and Urban Studies teaching and research group, and reinvigorating the Urban Planning Program.

Five years on, as Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Psychology, my aim is now to cement UWS as a national leader in the human services disciplines of the social and behavioural sciences. The Geography and Urban Studies groups are now ranked at world standard in research terms, and our Urban Planning degree is the top ATAR program in the state of NSW.

Beyond this, the staff of the school have a bigger mission – making a difference, to Greater Western Sydney and to the world. Our view is that we can best do this by producing top quality graduates, who have the requisite skills and perception to change the world, and a commitment to social justice that motivates activism.

Changing the world for the better requires perception. Our graduates are instructed in the structural underpinnings of the problems in our world. These are the root causes of discrimination, abuse, crime, disorder, alienation and exploitation. We can't arrest our way out of crime, we can't casework our way out of abuse and neglect, we can't 'counsel away' mental ill-health, and we can't build our way out of urban problems. Our graduates need to understand the social determinants of these issues, to plan interventions that work, and to prioritise primary interventions where this is possible.

It has been abundantly clear to researchers, and to most everyday

Australians, for some time that strong leadership is needed to reinforce multiculturalism in this country and to stamp out racism. One of our major research projects is the 18-year Challenging Racism Project, for which I am lead researcher. In February 2011, we revealed the perspectives of more than 12,500 surveyed Australians, and provided a national picture on racism, ethnic relations and cultural diversity. We supplied data on the state of community relations across the regions of Australia, and we provided resources for how local government and communities can take action against racism in their own backyard. These data and resources are publicly available on the UWS Challenging Racism Project website.

We have had a focus on both racist attitudes and experiences. This includes attitudes about diversity and minority groups, as well as racist experiences like discrimination. Twenty-seven per cent of Australians have experienced racism in the form of name-calling and insults. Most Australians readily admit that racism is a problem in Australia, but politicians have taken longer to see the signs. Eighty-five per cent of the Australian people acknowledge that racism is an issue.

In the fight against racism, one of our most powerful weapons is public discussion – bringing the most difficult issues to the front of people's minds, and not allowing them to hide in the shadows. That has been a social mission of the project. The project has a Twitter account and a Facebook page which we use to inject robust data into contemporary debates, and to direct people to effective anti-racism resources.

The recent incidences of racial abuse on Sydney buses have brought to public attention a troubling truth – that when

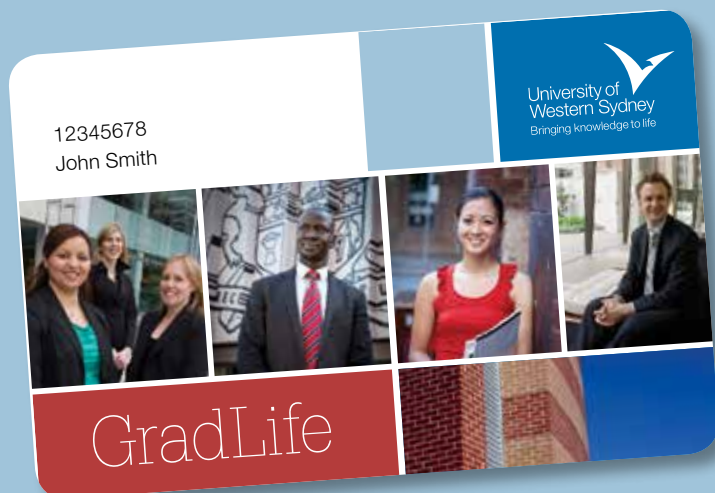
faced with acts of racism, Australians may be reluctant to stand up, take action, and defend those targeted by racism. We have been conducting a study of the role of bystanders in anti-racism initiatives, to see what ordinary Australians can do in response to racism in their day-to-day lives. What facilitates people to speak up, and what stops them from responding? When a bystander takes a stand, it sends an important message that racism is not okay, and will not be tolerated in Australian society.

The Challenging Racism Project fits neatly with my School's social justice agenda. Among my staff there are global leaders in research on sex and ethics, as well as on young people and anti-bullying. For example, we are developing and evaluating training in bystander anti-racism, in ethical conduct across the sexes, and in mindful approaches to dealing with difference. Our undergraduates go on to do 'people work', and we are providing them with the means for civil and respectful interactions with colleagues, clients and the public. And, they are perceptive of the underlying drivers of the social and psychological issues in our contemporary cities. It is a pleasure and an honour to lead an academic group that is so passionate about making a difference.

Members of the community who have witnessed an act of racism are being invited to complete a confidential online survey. We are interested in hearing from both those who did respond to incidences of racism, as well as those who felt they could not respond. We will use the data to provide guides and resources to encourage action against racism.

For more information, or to complete the online survey, visit:
uws.edu.au/opinion_piece

UWS Alumni GradLife benefits



Being a member of the UWS GradLife program entitles you to a range of special alumni benefits, including discounted membership to the UWS Library and gym, discounts at the UWS bookshop as well as invitations to special University events.

A full list is available online via the GradLife website.

All graduates of UWS are eligible for a GradLife card, so visit uws.edu.au/GradLife to apply for yours today.



CareerHub



uws.edu.au/AlumniCareers

Darling Mercado, Bachelor of Laws, 2012

GradLife Spring 2013 15



Alumni Giving – an interview with Tanya Rubin and Fiona Montebello

“Working together we can provide more opportunities to our students”

Many staff at UWS are also graduates of the University, returning to work at an institution that provided so much to them as students. Fiona Montebello and Tanya Rubin are two UWS graduates and staff members who believe in giving back to the UWS community not only through their work but by supporting scholarships.

WHAT DID YOU STUDY AT UWS?

Fiona: I studied a Bachelor of Business (Hospitality Management), graduating in 2002.

Tanya: I came back to the University as a mature-aged student to study a Master of Commerce (Workplace Relations). I graduated in 2006.

WHAT DID YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT YOUR UWS STUDENT EXPERIENCE?

Tanya: There were actually two things I enjoyed the most about my student experience. The first was the connections with other mature-aged students, around the same age as me and at a similar stage in their careers. Like me, they were looking to further their career opportunities with a degree. But by far the most enjoyable part of studying at UWS was the diversity of the people I studied with. I had the opportunity to work alongside international students and students who were new migrants to Australia, looking to give themselves better opportunities. What an inspiration.

Fiona: I also enjoyed the diverse environment of UWS, there were students and staff from all walks of life. I also believe that the quality of the teaching was high and there was a good emphasis on practical experience and knowledge which is a necessity in any

industry – so many academics had a wealth of industry experience and were not just teaching out of textbooks.

Tanya: Yes, very true Fiona. The lecturers and mentors at UWS made the learning experience that much more enjoyable. I still keep in touch with a few of my lecturers.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST ENJOYABLE PART OF BEING A PART OF THE UWS COMMUNITY?

Tanya: For me it is about the bigger picture, it's about what the University stands for. There is so much opportunity at UWS whether you are a graduate, staff member or a student – we are all part of a community working to provide opportunities for our students. Being at UWS is all about opportunity, opportunity to study and learn and to achieve whatever you set out to during your time at UWS.

Fiona: I think the most enjoyable thing is being part of an organisation that makes such a significant and important contribution to its community. Now as a staff member in the Legal Office at UWS, I get the chance to work on some really interesting matters that I wouldn't normally be exposed to in private practice, and to work with people who have such a wealth of knowledge and experience.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU TO GIVE BACK TO THE UWS COMMUNITY AND SUPPORT SCHOLARSHIPS?

Fiona: Firstly, the inspiration comes from the students who receive the support provided by alumni and staff. If these scholarships can help students who wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity, motivation, support or resources to further their education, it is money well spent.

What also inspires me is the collaborative effort of the UWS community, whether you are a graduate or a staff member, giving a little bit or a lot it all makes a difference to our students' lives.

Tanya: I believe in supporting scholarships because they give that little bit of extra support to our students. I feel like I am helping our students aspire to be something more and providing them with an opportunity they might not otherwise receive.

HOW DOES IT MAKE YOU FEEL THAT UWS STAFF AND ALUMNI HAVE SUPPORTED FIVE STUDENTS WITH UWS COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIPS?

Tanya: It makes me feel quite good, but I can't help but think of the possibilities. If we all worked together and gave to support scholarships there would be so many more opportunities we could provide to relieve some of the financial stress of attending university for our students most in need.

AS AN ALUMNUS OF UWS, DO YOU THINK IT IS IMPORTANT FOR ALUMNI TO GIVE BACK?

Fiona: Yes. The University has armed its alumni with the knowledge and skills to go out into the world and further their careers and lives. This is a perfect opportunity to pay it forward and help a deserving student along their journey.

To join Tanya and Fiona in supporting scholarships for UWS students please visit uws.edu.au/givenow

Scholarship Recipient Snapshot: Robert Hayes Memorial Scholarship



The Robert Hayes Memorial Scholarship was set up in memory of Associate Professor Robert Hayes – a UWS academic committed to providing the highest quality legal education to UWS students. The scholarship is a vision of Professor Hayes' widow Elaine Hayes and funded through ongoing gifts from friends and family of Professor Hayes along with gifts from UWS alumni, staff and students.

Awarded for the first time in 2013, the inaugural recipient of the Robert Hayes Memorial Scholarship is Mel Pudig. Mel is a fourth year UWS student studying a Bachelor of Business and Commerce/ Bachelor of Laws. She is passionate about the law, with many achievements during her time at UWS, including a number of prizes and a role as a tipstaff in the Supreme Court of NSW, which she has secured for her graduate year. Mel's ultimate goal is to work in criminal law and join the criminal bar.

A former hairdresser, Mel's career change came after a major health-scare, but the law is something she has always had an interest in and her passion developed quickly. Since entering her law degree, Mel has participated in national mooted competitions as well as coaching a high school mooted team with one member of her team receiving best speaker. For the remainder of her degree, Mel hopes to spend time coaching and mentoring other students in the Law School. She also plans to volunteer at a community legal centre to provide legal assistance to those that need it most.

"I am honoured and proud to be receiving this scholarship, particularly as it is the first time it has been awarded and it is representative of values akin to my own," says Mel.

Scholarships acknowledge academic and personal achievements and inspire our students to overcome setbacks to reach their full potential.

To support scholarships for UWS students visit uws.edu.au/givenow

Pushing the limit

Whether it is meeting the head of a Colombian death squad, or witnessing a companion stabbed, Dr Matthew Thompson has a knack for pushing the limit.

It's all material for his brand of literary non-fiction, which in recent years has seen him travel to some of the world's most dangerous places, publish a bestseller and numerous newspaper and magazine articles, and earn a Doctor of Creative Arts from the University of Western Sydney.

Matthew was originally drawn to journalism but felt in Australia the craft was too simplistic and lacked nuance. "I wanted to take a close look at character and the messiness of human motivation, and bring that kind of complexity to journalism," he says.

After four years as a journalist for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, he grew frustrated with newspaper writing, and left in pursuit of more exciting experiences.

In 2006, Matthew travelled through Colombia for several months, learning Spanish and immersing himself in the daily life of the people. His interest in the country was sparked by his father being offered a job posting there before Matthew was born.

"My mother vetoed it because it was incredibly dangerous for expats at the time. But I fantasised about what it would be like to be there," he says.

Matthew also felt there was a gap to be filled in books that had been written about Colombia.

Matthew documented his travels in his book, *My Colombian Death*, written as one component of his doctoral thesis under the supervision of Professor Ivor Indyk in the Writing and Society Research Centre at UWS (where he is now an Adjunct Fellow). Published by Picador, the book became a bestseller.

"Writing non-fiction, you have to keep doing things, so it's a discipline or art form. It's a ridiculous thing to do. But I get satisfaction out of shaping these stories and books out of reality and not just relying on imagination to conveniently fill in gaps."

Matthew has completed a new book, *Running with the Blood God: down and dirty with freedom-fighters, rebels and misfits*, about free thinkers living in different environments and cultures around the world who are pushing back against their social limits, which will be published in September by Picador. The book has taken him to a number of countries, beginning in Iran in 2009 after the disputed elections.

"There was a major crackdown going on there," he says. "I had to be very, very careful about what I was doing."

What has stayed with him was the intensity of the whole experience, but most of all "the bravery of the people".

In between these adventures, Matthew lives in the relatively peaceful confines of Dungog in New South Wales, writing his books, giving writing workshops, occasionally working as a firefighter and contributing to UWS's Writing and Society Research Centre as an Adjunct Fellow. In 2012, he worked as an editor at academic news and analysis website *The Conversation*, and has also held a lecturing position at the University of New South Wales, where he established a course in literary narrative journalism in 2011.

"What I liked about it so much is just seeing people start to come alive with discovering that basically their life can become a vehicle for it [writing]. They can live something and turn it into a wonderful group of words that captivates people," Matthew says.

Though Matthew certainly finds himself questioning the wisdom of his actions sometimes, he is motivated by discovering the truth of situations, and still has some "crazy ideas" up his sleeve to explore.

"It pushes me out of lazy thinking and lazy assumptions about life and people. It's satisfying."

Celebrating cultural diversity

Weaving together photography, video and new media to form a particular brand of “performance art”, Kellyville artist Liam Benson’s self-portraits explore Australian culture and identity in a unique way.



Liam Benson
Bachelor of Fine Arts (2004)

His artworks highlight the boundaries surrounding gender, race, religion and sexuality in our society, often mashing different aspects of them together in his videos and photographs to challenge common stereotypes.

“Before university I had a really big interest in native cultures and that really fed into my passion for finding out how cultures evolved and their different behavioural patterns and cultural attributes. I really like the symbolism and I like how all these different activities and things that make up a subculture really bind a community together,” he says.

Rather than critiquing the differences between these subcultures and the stereotypes that comes with them, Liam’s optimistic interpretations celebrate the unique cultural attributes highlighted by difference.

In the majority of his work he portrays a distinctly masculine or feminine character, often blurring the lines between the two genders.

“I play very masculine roles and the way I play those is they’re very low key, there’s not a lot of costume involved, it’s all about stripping men to their barest form. But I also love looking at

feminine culture as well, so that means playing with elements of drag.”

In a 2009 series about the perception of masculinity in Australia, his photographic work *Coat of Arms* portrays a bare-chested Liam in front of a backdrop of yellow wattle. He stares brazenly at the camera, looking every part the quintessential, bearded Australian male except for a glittering tiara depicting Australia’s national coat of

“UWS took something that was inside of me and really brought it out. Growing up in a very sheltered environment in the rural part of Sydney, I just hadn’t experienced very much and it opened my eyes.” – Liam Benson

arms perched atop an elegant up-do.

One of his favourite video works, a 2005 piece titled *You Like That...* shows a young Liam dressed in drag wandering through the bush at night-time, filmed completely in night vision.

“You, as the viewer, are in the role of the male, so you are following this female character into the bush and she’s also very much in control, she’s the one that’s beckoning. The work was actually about men, the male gaze and the kind of tension between gender within our society,” he says.

Liam admits his work can be provocative to some, but more often than not is engaging through the use of humour.

“I think there’s a lot of irony in my work. I don’t think I’ve ever really shocked anyone. I would rather connect with a broader audience and open up a discussion than shocking for the sake of shocking,” he says.

Studying a Bachelor of Fine Arts at UWS, which he completed in 2004, provided Liam with the most important development in his artistic career, giving his love of performing full expression.

“UWS took something that was inside of me and really brought it out. Growing up in a very sheltered environment in the rural part of Sydney, I just hadn’t experienced very much and it opened my eyes,” he says.

One of his proudest achievements to date was showcasing his works in May this year with eight other Australian artists in the exhibition, *Peripheral Visions: Contemporary Art from Australia*, at the Garis & Hahn Art Gallery in New York.



Shared lessons

UWS law alumni Jason Donnelly recently shared the lessons he has learned since graduating with first year law students at the School of Law Annual First Year Camp 2013.



"It was wonderful to be in one of the most exciting cities in the world and be taking our art over there," Liam says, who praised his fellow artists for the Australian humour and bold colours and metaphors in their work.

Along with showing two self-portraits, Liam did three performances in which he covered himself in glitter over an hour-long period.

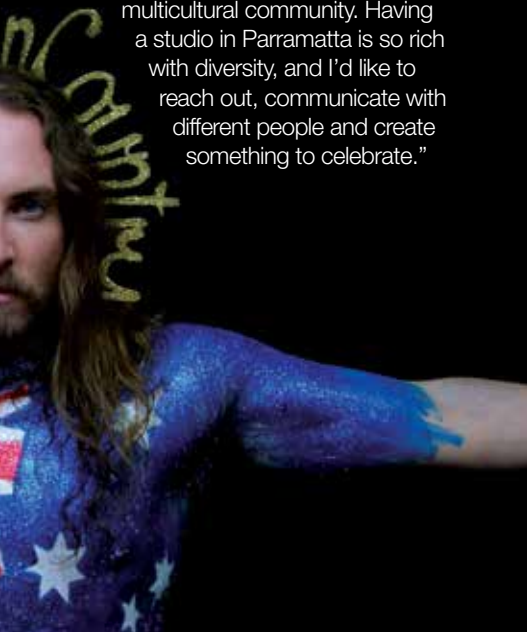
"I thought it was appropriate for New York because it's the place where you can go and be the largest and most sincere version of yourself. It's a metaphor for shining, being the best you can be."

Although he didn't consider it a viable career option until his third year at university, every facet of Liam's life involves art. He has a studio in Parramatta, but is also a creative workshop facilitator for Sunnyfields, a company that works with people living with disability.

"That's been a real career highlight, one of the most rewarding things I've ever done. This group of people are the most grateful people I've ever met, and they have no hidden agendas, they're just very honest."

Liam would like to branch out his practice in the future by working with smaller subcultural community groups, in particular the Indigenous community, with a project already in motion for this year.

"I hope to develop a larger project that celebrates the Indigenous community and I'd like to do the same with the multicultural community. Having a studio in Parramatta is so rich with diversity, and I'd like to reach out, communicate with different people and create something to celebrate."



Jason graduated with a Bachelor of Laws (Honours Class 1) and University Medal from UWS in 2009. Since that time he has been a casual lecturer with the School of Law, delivering over 200 lectures to next-generation lawyers.

After successful completion of the New South Wales Bar Association Examinations and New South Wales Bar Course, Jason was called to the New South Wales Bar on 2 May 2011 and has been a practising barrister-at-law ever since.

His in-depth and honest speech to the first year students delved into his own experiences and lessons in the transition from law school to his professional career.

Although the profession has its many hardships, Jason has a passion for the substance of law itself, the intellectual challenge it presents and the opportunity to help address the problems of other people.

"My passion lies in assisting in the provision of the administration of justice to members of the Australian community, particularly to individuals who come from a low socio-economic background like myself," he says.

Jason is a barrister based in Sydney and predominately practises in the area of criminal law and commercial litigation, "although I have been involved in the provision of legal advice and appearance work in a broad range of areas of the law, including administrative

law, discrimination law, family law and immigration law," he says.

The independence self-employment allows, and the diversity of work, are some of the best things about his job. "Every case is different with its own challenges and problems," he says.

Jason maintains a very close relationship with UWS, saying in many ways it has been a bastion of light for most of his adult life.

"I met my partner at UWS on the first day of law school, who I will marry on 12 October this year; I developed and have maintained many important friendships and networks through people I first met as a student attending the University; I have spent a substantial deal of my adult working life at UWS as a casual lecturer with the School of Law for the last five years; and UWS has always supported me in my endeavours over the years," he says.

Indigenous communications consultancy honoured

UWS graduate Noel Niddrie is one of Australia's leading Indigenous communications practitioners, having been at the forefront of the development of Indigenous media for the past two decades.

Now he has added to his list of achievements, with his communications and social research consultancy company, Winangali, taking out the 2012 Queensland Business of the Year award at the Telstra Australian Business Awards. An amazing achievement given Winangali entered the microbusiness category, which they also won, making them the only microbusiness nationally to also win its state award.

Noel says Winangali entered the Telstra Business Awards because "it was a directed and systematic way to objectively look at our business".

"The feedback we got was that we were a great example of a cause-committed company that was able to follow sound business principles with a strong bottom line," he says.

It has been this ability to combine commercial enterprise with meaningful work that has been the hallmark of Noel's professional life.

"What I've been able to do throughout my career are things that are good for my soul," Noel says. "I've never promoted a product based on profit levels."

His first job was as a Publicity Officer at the fledgling UWS Nepean, after he

completed a Bachelor of Arts (Applied Communication Studies). A role as National Public Relations Coordinator for Aboriginal Hostels Limited, a national Government-owned company providing short-term housing solutions for Indigenous people, followed, before he moved to Queensland to establish the newsroom of a new Indigenous radio station, 4AAA Murri Country.

There he pursued a vision to allow local Indigenous people to cover stories of national importance in their own communities, through the development of the National Indigenous News Network, Australia's only Indigenous-staffed and controlled news service.

"A group of Indigenous radio stations around the country would touch base in the morning, and then exchange news stories via radio feeds, the phone and fax system," Noel says.

He went on to become a program manager for the station, and again broke new ground, creating the first national broadcasts for events, such as the Tamworth Country Music Festival, the Gympie Country Music Muster and the Australian Reconciliation Convention in Melbourne, which brought together the community and Indigenous radio sectors for the first time.

Noel then moved onto a non-English speaking broadcast station, 4EB Ethnic Broadcasting, to revamp its marketing division before receiving the

call that signalled the next phase of his career. He was invited by the Federal Government in 2000 to become a communications consultant to undertake social research and marketing campaigns specifically targeted towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"There was a strong need in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities for information to be better targeted from Government and larger corporations," Noel says.

Five years later he established Winangali, taking its name from the Kamilaroi word, meaning to hear or to listen. Today some of its current projects include partnering with KPMG on an evaluation of the Indigenous Chronic Disease Package, a four-year communications project on promoting respectful relationships called The Line: Respect Each Other, and a communication campaign informing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities about the switchover from analogue to digital TV.

Although Queensland-based, Noel has opened an office in Sydney, with plans of expanding into Canberra. The business has six full-time staff, two contractors and, at any time, around 10-15 subcontractors including group facilitators and community engagement people.

"Wherever we go across the country, we try to leave a legacy, whether it be with skills, knowledge or financial assistance," he says.



Noel Niddrie
Bachelor of Arts (Applied Communication Studies) (1990)

“It’s not for me to tell somebody how to communicate in their community. What we’ll do is engage with someone locally so that when we come out, we are able to negotiate the politics and engage community organisations that are most influential. This way, we can help our clients get the best bang for their buck.” – Noel Niddrie

The anti-colonial stance that drove him to create the National Indigenous News Network has also been a critical element about how Winangali approaches its communications and research work.

“It’s not for me to tell somebody how to communicate in their community. What we’ll do is engage with someone locally so that when we come out, we are able to negotiate the politics and engage community organisations that are most influential. This way, we can help our clients get the best bang for their buck.”

While much of its work has come from the government sector in the past, Winangali is now diversifying its portfolio of projects to also develop commercially attractive products for non-government agencies and socially responsible organisations. The challenge for the company is always balancing being commercially competitive with being culturally credible.

“Community credibility is our currency. The challenge for us is to make sure that we’re credible within the Indigenous community whilst still being a profitable private organisation,” Noel said.

As a business owner, Noel enjoys having the opportunity to pursue projects that he believes in, though balancing the demands of a stable of clients can be tough at times.

“I appreciate the education I received at UWS and I’m now in a position where I can make decisions and choices. Without an education, my career would be influenced by others. One thing that I really enjoy about being in business is the personal freedom I have.”

Though these days, as the owner and leader of a thriving business, Noel spends less time on the road in remote parts of Australia, his experiences conducting focus groups and talking to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

people about the real issues that directly affect their lives have stayed with him.

“What really energised me was there is a commonality in the concept of being Indigenous. The locations and names might change, but there are shared experiences and a story that is so familiar wherever we go, whether you’re hunting emu in Goodooga or kangaroo in Bunbury or mutton-birding in Hobart. That’s nice to know.”

Widening participation in higher education

The University of Western Sydney has always led the sector on widening participation in higher education, due primarily to its mission and geographical location.



Primary school student learning about science at Campbelltown campus

Widening participation is highlighted as one of the University's key priorities in the *UWS Strategy and Plan 2010-2015: Making the Difference*. This closely aligns with staff views, as evidenced in the *MyVoice UWS Staff Engagement Survey*.

The Australian Government's ambition is that 20 per cent of domestic undergraduate students will be from low-SES backgrounds by 2020. UWS's initiatives supporting its widening participation objectives, which include access and retention programs, align with these targets.

The University's strategy is based on a targeted approach to identified groups which are underrepresented in higher education. While it focuses primarily on those disadvantaged in socio-economic terms, the University also works with Indigenous communities, Pacific Island communities, Out of Home Care (OOHC) students and other underrepresented groups.

A key feature of the Office of Widening Participation's approach is working

with carefully identified target schools on a mutually beneficial collaborative basis to ensure positive educational experiences and outcomes.

UWS Widening Participation Director Jane Cavanagh says, "The Widening Participation outreach program aims to impact on disadvantage by increasing the participation of our target groups in higher education. Former and existing students often make requests to volunteer for Widening Participation activities, so we reviewed which programs we could reconfigure in order to capture this spirit of altruism.

Nicole Peel, a Senior Project Officer for the Office of Widening Participation at UWS, assembled a group of activities to form a science day for Year 6 primary school students and invited schools to participate. The *Come Try Uni Day* offered students the chance to make arctic snow, monkey goo bubbles (slime) and fluoro worms (and learn about the science behind these), compete in an 'Amazing Race' around

the Parramatta campus, and participate in building and racing a model car.

There was an amazing response to the invitation, with schools signing up within 24 hours of it being issued.

"We knew we had to find a substantial body of volunteers/alumni to help. Alumni Relations kindly sent out invitations to the Alumni Association, and that, combined with a call to key Widening Participation networks, elicited an army of 23 volunteer student ambassadors," says Dr Cavanagh.

Having completed a Bachelor of Business and Commerce (Advanced Business Leadership) degree in 2011, Dana Quader was waiting to start a graduate position at a mid-tier city accounting firm when the call for volunteers came through. The accounting major says she "didn't hesitate" to volunteer her time.

"My time at UWS has been an experience that I would never trade for anything in the world. I thought this would be the perfect opportunity to give back to the university that has given so much to me," Dana says.

"I also thought the project was so bright and innovative because it gets children from a young age to start thinking about university. This is something they never really think about until they reach the later stages of high school. I especially found this project worthwhile because its focal point was children with low socio-economic backgrounds. The project demonstrates to them that no matter what their social backgrounds may be, through determination and hard work, they can still come to uni and attain a valuable education."

The *Come Try Uni Day* was held at the Parramatta campus on 6 December 2012, and the 165 primary school students attending were placed in teams of 10, with each led by a student ambassador. As the initial chaos subsided,

the school students became engaged with exploring the wonders of science and the world of higher education, guided by staff and the ambassadors.

The students' feedback demonstrated that they had become more aware of the benefits of higher education, and the fun that can be found through academic pursuit.

"As organisers, we expected the primary school students to relate well to the ambassadors and absorb messages about the accessibility and rewards of higher education through the day. However, we did underestimate the connection that ensued and the sheer power of this short-lived relationship to evoke wider, motivational behaviours," says Dr Cavanagh. "One primary school student was so taken with the 'coolness' of the ambassador that he drew him a high quality abstract art picture during the lunch break. The student believed that you had to be a 'geek' to go to university and the ambassador countered this perception.

"The ambassadors were also asked to come up with a name for their groups, with the PATHE (Pasifika Achievement to Higher Education) students transforming this relatively straightforward task into a song and dance performance worthy of a slot on *Australia's Got Talent*."

The students showed such commitment to the task that the program was adjusted to allow for all groups to perform to their peers.

The ambassadors also found the day to be a very positive experience. Eighty-five per cent of the volunteers stated in their feedback that this was a meaningful way



Primary school students at UWS Widening Participation event, Parramatta campus

"I especially found this project worthwhile because its focal point was children with low socio-economic backgrounds." – Dana Quader

for them to volunteer, 100 per cent felt that their contribution to widening participation was valued, and 100 per cent felt their time and skills were used effectively.

"The highlight of my day was most definitely seeing the excitement on the children's faces every time I would tell them the next activity we were undertaking," says Dana.

"During my time at uni I used to volunteer for lots of different events and I always hoped that I could still be involved even after I graduated, so getting the chance to be part of this event made me very happy. Volunteering as alumni is not only rewarding, but gives you feelings of nostalgia. When I'm back at uni it always puts a smile on my face."

The success of this collaborative endeavour and the strong desire of the ambassadors to take part in this work were overwhelmingly positive, and the Office of Widening Participation and the Alumni Office look forward to repeating this experience with other programs.

If you would like to sign up for such an activity, please contact the Office of Widening Participation at 02 9678 7603, and for more information on Widening Participation, visit uws.edu.au/widening_participation.

Meet your Board member



Tim Ferraro has been elected the new Graduate Board Member on the UWS Board of Trustees, taking over from previous graduate representative Dr Ken Langford. He will hold the position until 30 June 2017.

It was his long history with UWS that sparked Tim's interest in the position – he studied Environmental Science at Hawkesbury Agricultural College from 1988 to 1991 and then went on to complete Honours at UWS in 1992. He reconnected with UWS eight years ago, and is now the Chair of uwsconnect.

Tim's community involvement extends well beyond his work with UWS – the Dubbo resident has also helped to establish a local Landcare group, is a committee member for Little Athletics, and undertakes marketing and PR for local running festival, the Dubbo Stampede.

Tim currently works as a principal consultant (natural resources and agriculture) at GHD, and during his four-year term on the Board, hopes to achieve some objectives around sustainability and agricultural education at UWS.

"Globally, food security, agriculture, energy and climate are intersecting in an

interesting way and I think education has an important role to play in that," he says.

Tim will also be using and building on his existing network to discover what is most important to UWS alumni.

"I'll be making sure that I get out to the Board of Trustee events and extend my network so I can really get a sense of what the issues are and how I might best represent alumni," he says.

Graduates who were interested in the graduate representative position had to be nominated by two former UWS students before standing for election.

Tim praised the quality of the field of nominees in this election, held in March, with six graduates standing – the most UWS has ever had.

"Not only does that mean graduates are making their way in their chosen professions and getting a good profile, but also that they're keen to contribute back to UWS," he says.

Chapter Profile

Alumni Volunteer Network

“When you reach the top, you have to send the lift back down for others,” says UWS alumnus Sarah Eastlake-Smith. “Being an alumni volunteer allows me to send the lift back down to students who are just starting university.”

If you have ever thought about how you can give back to the next wave of prospective UWS students, or how you can share what you learned through your university experience and inspire others, you should consider joining over 2,000 of your peers as a member of the UWS Alumni Volunteer Network.

Alumni volunteers participate in a range of activities, designed to provide prospective students a taste of UWS life. By sharing where their studies have taken them in life after uni, how they overcame personal challenges to complete their degrees, and their advice on how alumni can achieve their career and life goals, alumni volunteers give potential students unique insights.

For alumni, it's a great way to remain engaged with the University – and gain the personal satisfaction that only comes with providing motivation and inspiration for others.

“We are truly appreciative of the efforts of our alumni volunteers in helping prospective students learn more about UWS and what they can hope to achieve through their university experience,” says Robert Wendon, UWS Alumni Relations Manager. “It is wonderful to see that so many of our alumni are willing to give back and stay engaged with the university to help other people as they begin their journey with UWS.”

Opportunities to volunteer

From chatting to prospective students at UWS Open Day to one-on-one and group mentoring with high school students, there are plenty of opportunities for alumni to become involved. New programs, such as ‘Pathways to Dreaming’, a mentoring program for Indigenous high school students, are fast attracting volunteers who see the potential to make a real difference in the lives of others.



FAST FORWARD

The UWS Fast Forward program sees the University partnering with high schools in Sydney's Greater West to increase higher education participation rates, and inform students about study and career pathways beyond Year 12. It culminates in a day-long conference which offers students workshops on a variety of topics, including building a CV, applying to uni or TAFE, and budgeting.

One of the highlights of the day is having successful UWS alumni share their experiences of life after uni with the students.

Jim Micsko says the alumni speakers at the conference have shown Fast Forward students that “everyone has a different journey through to higher education”.

“Our alumni speakers have been exemplars for our students, showing that this is what they can achieve if they really want to,” he says.

James Hamilton, a UWS alumnus who has volunteered at several events, said Fast Forward was his favourite.

“It's a brilliant program, with admirable objectives. I hear about the current challenges faced by the students, and I highlight – and encourage them to take up – the many opportunities that are available to them, regardless of their performance at school. I'm a firm believer in young people being given every opportunity to succeed, regardless of who they are or where they come from,” James says.



OPEN DAY

When checking out universities and courses, prospective students want to hear from those who have been there before what it's really going to be like. Enter alumni volunteers, who know what it's like to be faced with important choices and can provide some guidance informed by their own experience. Jef Miles, now a financial consultant at BT Financial, saw becoming an alumni volunteer as an opportunity to give back to the University. He enjoyed speaking at Open Day 2013 as a former student, and "making a positive difference in future UWS students' experiences".

COME TRY UNI DAY

The *Come Try Uni Day*, run by the Office of Widening Participation, brought primary school students to the Parramatta campus for a day of fun and educational experiences, giving them a taste of how enjoyable and accessible uni can be. Groups were led by alumni ambassadors, and Xiaoqing Lu was amongst the graduates participating.

"I enjoyed communicating with those kids, and it felt so good to see their eyes sparkling after the campus tour. I gave them a little boost to their confidence through different activities, so no matter whether they go to uni or not in the future, it is a good start to climb the ladder of success," Xiaoqing says.

If you would like to become an alumni volunteer, visit uws.edu.au/AlumniVolunteers to find out more.



VOLUNTEER WISDOM

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER?

"The desire to help others, become more of a leader and meet others with different experiences."

Jef Miles, Financial Consultant, BT Financial

"I have a unique story to tell which is representative of how university can help you become adaptable to other challenges life presents. I believe my story can motivate and inspire others."

Sarah Eastlake-Smith, Tutor, Scholastic Endeavours

"At a difficult time of my life, the university gave me opportunities that allowed me to pursue my personal and career aspirations. Being a volunteer allows me to give something back. To be frank, it's the least I can do."

James Hamilton, Manager, Planning and Governance, Sydney Water

"The practicality of the university and all its offerings when I was a student played a huge role in my achievements today. If through my volunteering I can play the same role in another's achievements, then how great of a cycle would this be to building a greater community for us all."

Emad Elkheir, Community Engagement Coordinator, GWS Giants

"I feel volunteering for me is an opportunity to provide hope for others, to help those in need of help and make a difference in someone's life."

Ziaoqing Lu, Music Educator, International School of Music



WHAT KIND OF INSIGHTS DO YOU SHARE WHEN YOU SPEAK ABOUT 'LIFE AFTER UNI'?

"If you take a job in a field other than what you studied for, it is not a waste. The biggest aim in life should be doing what makes you happy. Landing a job in a different area is not a drawback as you don't know where one seemingly irrelevant job may lead."

Sarah Eastlake-Smith

"What work is really like, how to have a life balance and attempt to answer any general questions that students may have."

Jef Miles

"That there are many opportunities in life. Some of them are obvious, some you have to seek out. That hard work and perseverance is the key to success. To take a few risks, try a few different roles, work in another country."

James Hamilton

"The great friendship, greater understanding of community and culture, importance of education and the opportunities... opportunities... opportunities one has after uni life."

Emad Elkheir

"I think confidence is very important. You should always believe that you can do it; there is nothing that you cannot cope with. If you think positively and confidently, then you behave positively, and you will overcome the difficulties."

Ziaoqing Lu

alumni events 2013



VOLUNTEER THANK YOU FUNCTION

The University of Western Sydney held its first Volunteer Thank You Function in July to celebrate the UWS alumni who have supported the University by assisting at UWS activities in the last financial year.

Fifty guests enjoyed an à la carte 'Thank You and Appreciation Dinner' at the newly completed Boilerhouse Restaurant on UWS Parramatta campus.

The event was a great success, says Alumni Relations Manager, Robert Wendon, with a presentation by guest speaker, UWS Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor, International, and UWS IT alumnus, Yi-Chen Lan, as one of the highlights of the evening.

"Professor Lan presented an interesting address regarding his own experience as a new overseas student commencing successful study at UWS and joining the staff of UWS to rise to the senior staff ranks as Director, International, and Associate PVC, International," he says.

The attending Alumni had volunteered their time at events such as UWS Open

Day, UWS Postgraduate Expo, the Fast Forward program, and high school information days on and off campus.

"The option of volunteering for UWS has obviously struck a chord with some 2,000 of our graduates as a way of giving back to the University for what they consider is their most valuable asset – an excellent education that has prepared them for the modern day job market and provided a positive learning and life experience for them to assist in establishing successful careers and businesses," Wendon says.

CELEBRATE HAWKESBURY LUNCHEON

UWS graduates and friends of the Hawkesbury Alumni Chapter (HAC) gathered at The Strangers Dining Room at NSW Parliament House, Sydney, for a luncheon on 5 July 2013 to celebrate the significant contribution the Hawkesbury campus has made to UWS and to agriculture in Australia.

Eighty guests were in attendance to hear the Acting Vice-Chancellor,

Rhonda Hawkins, deliver an interesting presentation about the extensive teaching and research facilities that are currently under development on the Hawkesbury campus and its history.

It was revealed at the event that HAC members, two of whom are now elected representatives in the NSW Legislative Council, will establish a HAC Community Award.

"From 2014, a special medal will be struck and a member of the Hawkesbury regional community who has served their community with distinction will be awarded the medal annually," says UWS Alumni Relations Manager, Robert Wendon.



CAN NETWORKING FUNCTION

The Coop Alumni Network (CAN), a UWS Alumni Chapter, invited alumni who have completed an internship arranged by the Careers and Cooperative Education Unit to the Parramatta campus on 25 July 2013 for the CAN Networking Function.

This year's topic was "Online Networking". CAN members benefited from the opportunity to speak to and hear from LinkedIn talent acquisition professionals Richard Mitchell and Ash Rodrigues who presented on the importance of having an online presence and using it to acquire the career of their dreams.

"LinkedIn made an informative and entertaining presentation. Refreshments were served and there was an opportunity to network," says Freny Tayebjee, Manager, Careers and Cooperative Education, UWS.

The purpose of the event was to keep in touch with former students and provide them with ongoing professional development. This event enabled alumni to gain vital insights into the world of online networking, which will certainly aid in their career development.

"It was very successful. Attendees and guest mingled, networked and were very enthusiastic," says Freny. "Meeting past students and finding out how they are progressing in their career is always satisfying. It is also most encouraging to see our past students becoming our industry partners – when they offer internship opportunities to current students."

uws.edu.au/CAN



Left to right: Mr Anthony Weymouth, Senior Trade Commissioner Manila; Dr Cielito Habito, former Director General of the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA); Ms Rosemarie Edillon; Ambassador Bill Tweddell; Ms Wit Holganza of the Philippines Australia Alumni Association.

CONNECT WITH AUSTRALIA – A PHILIPPINES AUSTRALIAN ALUMNI NETWORKING RECEPTION

Seven Filipino UWS Alumni attended 'Connect With Australia' to celebrate their achievements gained from their Australian education and to reconnect with other Australian alumni.

Connect with Australia was held at the Dusit Thani Hotel in Makati City on 26 June 2013.

The Australian Trade Commission (Austrade) in Manila and the Philippine Australia Alumni Association hosted the event, attracting 260 alumni of universities and educational institutions both in Australia and in the Philippines, where local institutional partners deliver Australian programs.

Australian Ambassador to the Philippines, Bill Tweddell, hosted the event and TV 5 news anchor Martin Andanar, himself an alumnus, was the Master of Ceremonies.

"You have achieved a 'Future Unlimited,' which is Australia's international brand for our education offerings. 'Future Unlimited' conveys vast potential and opportunities available as a result of an Australian education," said Ambassador Tweddell. "I'm sure you can attest to the quality of Australian education – you are living proof of it."

upcoming events 2013

SEPTEMBER	Spring UWS Graduation Ceremonies	uws.edu.au/NewAlumni
4-7 OCTOBER	Parramasala Festival, Parramatta	parramasala.com
8 NOVEMBER	UWS Law Alumni Occasional Address	uws.edu.au/LawAlumni

FIND OUT MORE

Look online at uws.edu.au/AlumniEvents or contact the UWS Alumni Unit at alumni@uws.edu.au for more information

stay connected

Immediately following your graduation or completion of studies at the University of Western Sydney, you become a valued member of the UWS alumni community. We encourage all of our graduates to update their details online and remain connected with UWS.

**UPDATE YOUR DETAILS, JOIN CHAPTERS AND STAY CONNECTED ONLINE AT
UWS.EDU.AU/STAYCONNECTED**



facebook.com/UWSAlumni



twitter.com/UWSAlumni



uws.edu.au/alumniLinkedIn

Getting around campus is about to **change**

Major construction is planned from June 2013. This will affect access arrangements to and from the campus for motorists and pedestrians.

The first stage of construction will affect pedestrian access to and from Macarthur railway station, and car access along Gilchrist Drive and Goldsmith Avenue (including entry to campus facilities and car parking areas located on these roads).

Alternative access routes will be provided. We are committed to minimising the impact of construction and will be maintaining safe, 24 hour access for students and staff.

For further information please visit
uws.edu.au/campbelltownresidentialdevelopment

If you have any questions or you would like to provide feedback on the project, please email campusdevelopment@uws.edu.au



GRADLIFE MEMBERSHIP

We also invite you to join the GradLife Membership Program to gain access to benefits exclusive to UWS alumni.

TO FIND OUT MORE OR TO JOIN VISIT UWS.EDU.AU/GRADLIFE