LABOUR OF LOVE

Daina Reid’s journey from student to acclaimed director

WHERE ANGELS FOLLOW

Epidemiology in disaster zones

IT TAKES A MILLION

Education’s technological revolution
Cite (sāɪt) v. To put forward thought-provoking arguments; to offer insightful discussion and new perspectives on topics of social, political, economic or environmental relevance; to report on new thinking. Sight (sāɪt) n. A feature or object in a particular place considered especially worth seeing. v. To frame or scrutinise community, research and business initiatives; to present points of view on current issues. Site (sāɪt) n. The location of a building or an organisation, esp. as to its environment. v. To place or position in a physical and social context.

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Where angels follow

Typhoon Haiyan was the deadliest typhoon to hit the Philippines in more than 130 years. Associate Professor Linda Selvey, from Curtin’s School of Public Health, was part of the international medical relief effort.

It takes a million

Curtin is moving closer to its goal of having one million learners by 2017 with the help of free, digital course delivery.

Photo essay

Curtin’s main campus has come alive with a variety of international food and roving performers heralding the start of a 20-year campus transformation.

AIMEing for the stars

A mentoring program to increase the number of Indigenous students in tertiary study is showing signs of success at Curtin.

Pride in diversity

Curtin and its alumni are gaining national recognition for LGBTI inclusiveness strategies.

Championing mental health

Over the course of her career, the Hon Helen Morton MLC has been an advocate for improving Western Australia’s mental health services.

Setting it straight

Anthony Tran is one of four directors of an international publishing company that aims to improve relations between China and Australia.

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Cite magazine is now online.
Read and share your favourite stories and access web-exclusive content at curtin.edu.au/cite
AS CURTIN’S fifth Vice-Chancellor, it is my pleasure to introduce the first edition of Cite magazine for 2014. After more than 20 years in senior management positions at a research-intensive university on the east coast of Australia, I am delighted to be able to lead Curtin towards its 2030 goal of becoming a leading international university.

While research and teaching form our core business, earlier this year University Council approved a revised set of Curtin’s Values. After extensive engagement with staff and students, five key values were identified: integrity, respect, courage, excellence and impact. Living these values will enrich the Curtin experience for staff, students and our partners, and will help to create the culture that delivers our 2030 vision.

In this edition of Cite, our alumna in the spotlight is Humanities graduate Daina Reid, who completed undergraduate studies in television and theatre at Curtin before enjoying a highly successful career. In what may be the pinnacle of her career to date, Reid has been selected to direct the ABC’s adaptation of Kate Grenville’s *The Secret River*.

On page 10, we feature the work of Associate Professor Linda Selvey from the School of Public Health. In partnership with the WHO and the Philippines Department of Health, Associate Professor Selvey worked as part of the vital emergency surveillance program that was put into place in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan last year.

Curtin is well on its way to offering access to courses through new digital technologies. In this edition of CITE, we look at MOOCs – or Massive Open Online Courses – as a key strategy in Curtin’s *Learning for Tomorrow project*, which aims to engage one million learners globally by 2017.

For the second year running, Curtin was recently ranked as the top university in Australia in the Pride in Diversity listings of the top 10 Australian LGBTI-friendly employers. This is an important outcome for us as we ensure that the University is a diverse and inclusive workplace (see page 17).

Finally, we take a look at the new Curtin-AIME partnership that received $1.2 million in Commonwealth funding over three years to expand its work in inspiring Indigenous teenagers to go to university.

I hope you enjoy reading about these and other exciting initiatives in this edition of Cite. In addition to being available in print, the magazine is also available online at curtin.edu.au/cite.

Professor Deborah Terry
The Festival of Learning focused on enhancing student engagement using new technology.

Avatars, second life, virtual worlds, augmented realities and 3D scenario training were showcased at Curtin’s inaugural Festival of Learning in March. The showcase of Curtin’s plans for the Learning for Tomorrow project included 60 technology-driven sessions over a three-day period.

“Our goal is to ensure Curtin is the most sought after provider of education; providing an innovative, richly interactive, personalised learning experience” said Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Jill Downie.

The majority of sessions were focused on how to enhance student engagement, information retention and interactivity using new technology which will be seen more and more throughout Curtin’s classrooms.

There was a variety of interactive sessions such as Leah Irving’s session where attendees explored the idea of working with avatars in virtual worlds as they created their own personal avatars and went on a virtual journey.

Dr Janet Beilby’s session included an avatar named Jim who has the ability to help speech pathology students improve their in-clinic communication skills.

“Our goal is to reach one million engaged learners by 2017,” said Deputy Vice-Chancellor. “We want to ensure all our students enjoy a personalised experience at Curtin and know they’re highly valued members of the Curtin community, regardless of their location or choice of study method.”

See page 06 for more about new approaches to education and Curtin’s goal to engage a million learners.

Three Curtin staff awarded Orders of Australia

In this year’s Australia Day Honours celebration, three Curtin staff members each received an Order of Australia for outstanding service within their field.

Professor Mike Daube from the Faculty of Health Sciences was honoured for distinguished service to medicine, particularly in the area of public health policy and reform, through advisory roles with leading national and international organisations and to youth.

Associate Professor Ted Wilkes, from the National Drug Research Institute, was awarded for distinguished service to the Indigenous community as a leading researcher in the area of public health and welfare to youth in Western Australia and to the provision of legal support services.

Professor Peter Newman, Director of the Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute (CUSP), was recognised for distinguished service to science education as an academic and researcher, through contributions to urban design and transport sustainability, and to the community.

“These honours are further recognition of the tremendous work done by Curtin staff and graduates, to provide leadership on real world issues affecting the wider community,” said Professor Colin Stirling, acting Vice-Chancellor.

Look Ever Forward was launched in June.

Look Ever Forward can be considered a companion to Michael White’s book, WAIT to Curtin: a History of the Western Australian Institute of Technology, which chronicles the earlier history of the institution. Together, the books span Curtin University’s entire history from its humble beginnings as Perth Technical School in 1900 to the international university we know today.

Look Ever Forward was launched at an event on 11 June at Curtin Stadium and is available at the Curtin Co-Op.
Research collaboration boosts resource industry

Curtin University, CSIRO and The University of Western Australia (UWA) have come together in an exciting new collaborative project, the National Resource Sciences Precinct (NRSP). The NRSP has been formed to help connect the world’s best researchers with industry and government in order to concentrate efforts on the challenges facing the resources industry.

The NRSP aims to position Perth as an internationally recognised leader in minerals and energy research by capitalising on the concentration of multinational resource companies and research facilities found in Perth and greater Western Australia.

The new collaborative approach and pooling of resources will allow for large-scale research and more streamlined funding for the resources industry. This new effort by NRSP has already proved effective as they recently secured funding for a multi-million dollar advanced mineral characterisation facility dedicated to resource-based science and exploration.

The three founding partners, Curtin University, CSIRO and UWA, have had a distinguished working relationship over the years, collaborating on other successful projects such as the Pawsey Supercomputing Centre and the National Geosequestration Laboratory.

Young guns recognised in 40under40 Awards

Curtin student Chris Finn, graduate Jason Masters and research fellow Josh Byrne were named among the winners in the annual Business News 40under40 awards, which celebrate the entrepreneurial achievements of 40 Western Australians under the age of 40.

Chris Finn is an experienced surveyor with international experience who established the Precision Surveying Solutions group in 2006. Finn is enrolled in the Growth Owner Program at Curtin Business School and is a three-time Australian Frisbee Champion.

Jason Masters was born and raised in the Pilbara before relocating to Perth where he received an Associate Degree in Indigenous Community Management from Curtin. Jason is now the Executive Officer of Kuruma Marthudunera Ltd, assisting in the negotiations of governance, management and finances between the Kuruma Marthundera people and mining corporations. Jason has also set up a variety of successful enrichment programs for the Roebourne community.

Research fellow Josh Byrne is a familiar face owing to his role in ABC’s Gardening Australia and also runs the multi-award winning landscape design company, Josh Byrne and Associates. Josh is currently working with Curtin University’s Sustainable Policy Institute.

Celebration of sustainable development at Curtin

Curtin’s inaugural Sustainability Lecture and Showcase in May brought together the University’s best innovations in sustainable development. More than 350 people attended the event at Perth’s Government House and many more watched the lecture via a live webcast.

Economist and senior UN advisor Professor Jeffrey Sachs delivered the keynote address on ending extreme poverty. Universities across ten countries tuned in online.

“The lecture was inspiring and informative, giving an insight into the challenges for the coming generations,” says BMCA’s Professor Shubhada Kamalapurka.

Following the lecture, attendees enjoyed a showcase of Curtin’s initiatives in sustainable development. Among the displays were Curtin Volunteers’ award-nominated green community projects and the United Nations Environment Programme EcoChallenge, an online sustainability game for school-aged students. Curtin organises the Australian branch of this global competition.

Director of Curtin’s Australian Sustainable Development Institute, Mike Burbridge, says the showcase truly recognises sustainable development as a broad and multidisciplinary field.

“There is more to sustainable development than scientific research,” Mr Burbridge says. “At Curtin we not only research it – we also teach it and practise it.”
Curtin hosted Perth’s first “Color Me Rad” run in May, for students and the general public. Participants’ white tee-shirts were quickly stained every colour of the rainbow as they ran the 5 km circuit through the Bentley Campus whilst an artillery of cornflour “colour bombs” rained down. The end of the race was a colourful party on Curtin grounds complete with DJ and dance floor.
IT TAKES A MILLION

STORY ANDREA LEWIS
New digital technologies have raised expectations that universities will not only provide new ways of learning but also offer some level of open access to their courses. This means that online learning is now a common feature of most universities’ educational palette, with learners increasingly able to access course content through a variety of sophisticated platforms.

For Curtin – under its guiding strategy titled ‘Learning for Tomorrow’ – a host of digital and online initiatives are already in place. One such initiative is MOOCs, or massive open online courses – with three already available and hosted by Open2Study, CourseSites or Curtin Commons.

Academic Engagement Projects Director at Curtin Dr Nathaniel Ostashevski, says that MOOCs are a key part of providing open learning experiences – both for students enrolled in a degree and for the potentially millions of people wanting a taste of Curtin’s course offerings.

“Learners now expect to access educational content through iPads, iPhones and other mobile technologies,” says Ostashevski, whose role at Curtin is to work with staff in developing new approaches to eLearning and curriculum design. “Many no longer want to – or can’t – attend a traditional lecture. Universities must deliver through other means or be left behind as the global education market changes.”

The ‘MOOCification’ of existing units at Curtin now offers enrolled students an alternative way of completing content within an award course unit. For non-enrolled students, it allows access from anywhere in the world at any time to modules of learning without the commitment to a degree course.

“We know that more than 50 per cent of MOOC learners have a degree, with a large proportion of others interested in pursuing one,” adds Ostashevski. “Either way, these are lifelong learners accessing MOOCs – people wanting to develop knowledge or skills in a particular area without necessarily seeking a qualification. MOOCs are a sampling of what Curtin has to offer.”

Curtin’s Discovering the Universe through Science and Technology MOOC was launched in mid-2013, attracting more than 6,000 students. Subsequently, Curtin has also launched an Australia China Trade MOOC – now offered in Chinese as well as English – and, earlier this year, a Participating in the Digital Age (PDA) MOOC.

It’s the PDA MOOC that best displays the latest iteration of MOOCs over their short four-year history. Designated as a collaborative MOOC – or cMOOC – PDA provides a far greater level of connectedness amongst all enrolled, and is particularly innovative in how it bridges university students with external learners. Making use of tools such as blogs, pinboards and wikis, participants from all over the world can connect, share and collaborate across the MOOC network, both professionally and personally.

With MOOCs at Curtin entering their second year and the integration of digital technologies into courses well underway, the University moves closer to achieving its goal of having one million learners engaged at Curtin by 2017.
“The connectedness of the cMOOC serves as a sort of apprenticeship for younger students, at the same time as facilitating broader understanding of a topic by encouraging dialogue across generations, across countries and across cultures,” says Senior Lecturer in the School of Education Dr Jennifer Howell, who delivers the PDA cMOOC.

“The networking capacity of the model is also much more responsive to a learner’s needs. While 50 percent of the PDA MOOC is stable content, the remaining 50 per cent is determined by the interests that emerge from those in the course. Based on strong threads of interest that become evident, I can push content out accordingly. ”

“cMOOCs add value to existing course material by enabling a rich add-on of content and, ultimately, a dynamic learning experience with far more engagement”, explains Howell.

WHILE MOOCs have perhaps been the flagship initiative in encouraging external learners to tap into the University, it is only one of the many technology-related initiatives that will help Curtin reach a core strategic goal – to remain an innovative global leader in teaching, learning and research.

The broader approach for digital engagement is embedded in the University’s Curtin Converged strategy, which outlines a new model of teaching and learning. From 2016, Curtin’s top degree courses will be delivered using a mix of traditional on-campus teaching, flipped classes, technology-enriched environments, 3D technology that actively engages students, and distributed learning techniques such as video conferencing. About 40 collaborative learning spaces have already been established, changing the way education is delivered.

The use of gaming platforms with avatars and augmented realities are already part of curriculum design in some courses – Curtin Business School, for example, has adapted the popular Oculus Rift technology to suit course content. And Curtin’s Humanities-based Hub for Immersive Visualisation and eResearch (HIVE) provides an immersive environment for data simulation and virtualisation. HIVE’s four large-scale visualisation systems for interdisciplinary research, and for teaching and learning, is unprecedented on a university campus in Australia.

“The goal is to offer students a rich combination of learning approaches throughout their course of study,” says Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education, Professor Jill Downie. "Indeed, students enrolling in Curtin courses already have myriad ways in which to assemble this experience.

“A mixed strategy is essential in promoting learning through active engagement and collaboration. This is a model where students are co-creators in their learning journey. The use of flexible content, time and space brings with it a strong emphasis on self-guided learning and discovery rather than on being taught.”

It is the process of self-guided learning and discovery that, says Ostashewski, is the essence of an authentic learning experience.

“Authentic experience comes from a personalised learning experience,” explains Ostashewski. “It enables education delivery to be agile and responsive to students in real time. The goal is to fine-tune details of the curriculum as the learner goes on their learning journey. Online quizzes are readily available and assessments can be reviewed immediately, with individualised responses directing students to personalised resources.”

It is learning analytics that is the great enabler of this kind of adaptive, personalised learning. Much as Google or Amazon assess your personal preferences by building an ever-changing and unique profile, so learning analytics can determine a student’s current needs and interests based on the tools and resources they select.

“Research shows that this kind of personalised learning brings a host of benefits,” says Ostashewski. “Besides accessing information more effectively, participants also experience increased motivation and levels of engagement.”

Curtin has boldly stepped into the online space, although not at the expense of the bricks and mortar that make for a lively campus. The University’s ambitious master plan – a long-term place activation strategy that will see the Bentley Campus become a vibrant hub of teaching, learning and research, as well as living and retail – is already being realised. The WA Planning Commission’s Directions 2031 Strategy has identified Curtin–Bentley as a Specialised Activity Centre that will support the flourishing of the campus.

“The preservation of face-to-face learning – especially for students enrolled in an undergraduate degree – is very much a part of the future of education,” says Downie. “The ‘tradition’ of a university campus – of active discussion amongst students, and of dialogue between professor and student – is possibly stronger than ever.

“Students will always want to come to campus. What we are doing is re-thinking course design and learning engagement accordingly so that, ultimately, a student’s education is enhanced through a truly personalised and memorable student experience.”
Digging deep_Kyle De Souza

STORY STEVE PACKER

WHEN Kyle De Souza says he would like to start a mine where all the profits go to a charity for developing schools and communities in impoverished parts of the world, it would be easy to dismiss it as a well-meaning dream.

But De Souza is too capable and practical for that.

He graduated from Curtin’s Western Australian School of Mines in 2008 with a Bachelor of Mining Engineering and recently passed his first class mine manager exam, enabling him to manage any mine in the world. Having already gained extensive experience from several mine production and management roles, he currently works for Gold Fields Ltd as production engineer at one of the largest underground mines in WA.

He’s no dreamer on the charity front, either. In 2011 he went to Kenya to help at an orphanage in Nairobi, and on returning to Australia five months later, set up the not-for-profit organisation Ewangan Inc (ewangan.org) to give the children of Maasai cattle herders desperately needed access to education in remote areas.

This year, two of Ewangan’s students became its first to achieve primary school graduation.

“In what is a record for East Africa, we took two guys who were absolutely illiterate and educated them from pre-primary to grade 8 in two years. It has been the focus of a lot of media attention in Kenya,” says De Souza.

Ewangan functions from a government school which it upgraded and supplied with everything from electricity to desks and books, and its volunteer teachers conduct night classes so the Maasai can still attend to their cattle during the day.

“We have 60 students enrolled and attendance can vary from about seven to 30, depending on the season. Sometimes they want to stay where they are because of dangerous flash-flooding or they are moving with the rains. If they lose a cow, it can cost them a year’s salary.”

De Souza, who is Ewangan’s Australian president, returned to Kenya last year to arrange the organisation’s registration as a non-governmental organisation, to ease international funds transfers. Expansion into Maasai areas in Tanzania and Uganda is in Ewangan’s 10-year plan.

“This is just the start,” he says. “Probably the worst part is that I get too much attention. I’ve had an amazing team which has been critical through all stages of the project.”

That team includes fellow Curtin graduates Mahul Shah, Cirag Soni and Reuben Dias, who are respectively Ewangan’s Kenyan president, vice-president and treasurer in Australia.

Labour of love_Daina Reid

STORY SARAH CROSS

LIKE many Australians growing up in the 1980s, Daina Reid had her own personal moment with INXS. And it was that strong memory of a 1983 concert at the Perth Entertainment Centre that Reid brought to the set when she directed the recent TV mini-series, INXS: Never Tear Us Apart.

Understanding the emotion attached to Australia’s most successful rock band, Reid says telling their story was a labour of love.

“It was a great honour to undertake the project and reach out to the fans,” she explains. “Because I was one too.”

Reid says while the surviving band members all had their own personal reaction to the mini-series, they didn’t change the way Reid had sequenced their songs.

“I was chuffed,” she says.

An acclaimed director, who has received best director Australian Academy Cinema Television Arts (AACTA) nominations for Paper Giants: The Birth of Cleo and Howzat! Kerry Packer’s War, Reid began her career as an actor on some of Australia’s best-loved comedies, Full Frontal and Jimeoin.

“I was working on Full Frontal and my dressing room was next door to the Blue Heelers’ editing suite,” she recollects.

“The last live night I thought, ‘I don’t want to do this anymore,’ and asked if I could do a director’s attachment. I directed an episode of Blue Heelers and I never acted again.”

The jump to directing wasn’t a big one for Reid, who says having been an actor and studying film and television at Curtin, she understands what an actor needs.

“The things I loved about acting. I use as a director; breaking down the text and discovering how a person’s mind works,” she says. “I still get to do all that but now it’s via the fabulous actors I work with.”

Reid has fond memories of her time at Curtin in the 1980s and says there’s no doubt it contributed to her success.

“The course was so practical,” she recalls. “We were always making videos and doing lots of different things with lots of different styles, which greatly contributed to helping me find my voice.”

As for the future: “I am embarking on a telemovie for the ABC called The Secret River which was adapted from a Kate Grenville novel,” she says.

“It’s a period piece, about an Englishman transported to Australia for theft.”

For Reid, it’s the opportunity to bring Australian stories to our television that helps maintain her passion for directing.

“I’m really lucky to be doing what I love to do,” she says.
Almost a third of the Philippines’ health system was damaged or destroyed last year by Typhoon Haiyan, the deadliest typhoon to hit the country in more than 130 years. Associate Professor Linda Selvey, from Curtin’s School of Public Health, was part of the international medical relief effort that assisted the Philippines following this extreme natural disaster, continuing the school’s strong tradition of providing practical assistance to the international community in times of need.

STORY CLAIRE BRADSHAW
WHEN the call went out from the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN) in early November for volunteers to assist in the Philippines in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan, Associate Professor Linda Selvey was in the country’s capital, Manila, within a week.

GOARN, which is run through the World Health Organization (WHO), provides a coordinated international response to countries seeking help with potential disease outbreaks. In the wake of Typhoon Haiyan – believed to be the most powerful storm to strike land ever recorded, with winds of more than 250km per hour – the public health need was both large and urgent: the super typhoon killed more than 6,000 people in the Philippines, injured more than 27,000 people and destroyed essential services and infrastructure across large parts of the country’s central islands.

Selvey, who is Director of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at Curtin, was selected by GOARN to coordinate its early warning and response network. She and her team worked with the Philippines’ Department of Health in Manila to assess information coming in from the field, determine the major infectious disease risks and plan appropriate action. Needless to say, this was a complex task under difficult circumstances.

“While the Philippines has typhoons every year, the intensity of this one was beyond their experience,” explains Selvey, an infectious diseases expert who has previously worked for WHO in the eradication of polio in India and Nepal. “The devastation was immense, ultimately affecting around 16 million people.

“Lack of food, water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, and the overcrowding created by the displacement of so many people created significant public health risks, both short and long-term. The key infectious diseases we were on the lookout for included dengue fever and other mosquito-borne viruses, measles, cholera, typhoid and leptospirosis, a bacterial infection commonly spread through the urine of rats that can lead to liver failure.

“Collecting and processing information from the field was challenging. Not only were many health facilities destroyed, but the mobile phone systems we relied on for communication from the field were inoperable in some areas and the computer systems we used to collect and analyse the information were often down. Laboratory testing facilities were also extremely limited.”

Despite the significant communication and technology challenges and the often chaotic work environment in the Manila office – the international team of up to 100 people was changing constantly as volunteers came and went – weekly reports quickly flagged health issues requiring attention.

“One of the trends we picked up on was that animal bites were on the increase, raising concerns about rabies,” elaborates Selvey. “We quickly organised for rabies vaccines to go to areas where they didn’t have any.”

While the incoming information allayed concerns about a leptospirosis outbreak, measles and polio immunisation programs were arranged and response plans prepared for the anticipated increase in cases of dengue fever, cholera and typhoid – diseases already endemic in the region but set to be fuelled by the overcrowded, unhygienic conditions. The GOARN team also negotiated the supply of rapid response test kits for the early identification of dengue fever infection out in the field.

During her month-long stay in the Philippines, which she remembers as “exhausting, but a privilege to be part of”, Selvey also helped prepare plans and budgets to meet the country’s ongoing surveillance needs while its health infrastructure was being rebuilt.

GRANTING Selvey time off from her academic position at short notice was a quick and easy decision for the head of the School of Public Health, Professor Bruce Maycock.

Curtin has been a member of GOARN since its inception in 2000, with two of its internationally esteemed staff – Professor John Mackenzie and the late Professor Aileen Plant – playing an instrumental role as inaugural members of GOARN’s steering committee.

Both have been heavily involved in infectious disease outbreak responses around the world, with Plant – who was Professor of International Health at Curtin – awarded the National Medal of Honour by the Vietnamese Government in recognition of her leadership of the SARS outbreak in that country in 2003. Selvey is in fact a protégé of Plant’s, having been taught and inspired by her during her Master of Applied Epidemiology studies; she recalls her as “an extraordinary mentor and leader, both smart and pragmatic”.

Mackenzie, who holds an adjunct research position at Curtin following his retirement as Professor of Tropical Infectious Diseases, led a GOARN team into China to investigate the source of the SARS outbreak. He also assisted with tsunami relief in Banda Aceh in 2004 and was Chair of the WHO International Health Regulations Emergency Committee for the H1N1 flu pandemic in 2009-10. He remains a member of the GOARN steering committee and is a member of the technical advisory group for the Bi-Regional Strategy for Emerging Diseases, which aims to increase preparedness for emerging diseases and pandemics across South-East Asia and the Western Pacific regions.

“The School of Public Health has always had an externally focused view,” Maycock explains. “It was founded by Professor Colin Binns on the principles of the Harvard School of Public Health that science should be tempered by compassion, with high-quality research applied to those most in need.

“Most people are drawn to public health because they want to make a difference and we actively support our staff and students to do just that.

“Linda came to Curtin in 2012 after a long career as a medical doctor, cancer researcher and public health advocate and, most recently, as CEO of Greenpeace Australia Pacific. She brings a lot of practical experience to the table.”

Maycock said Curtin was keen to further share its strengths in epidemiology with the international community. Selvey, too, wants to tread new ground, developing a new Curtin course to explore public health responses to climate change.

“We have always lived with natural disasters, but their severity is increasing as Typhoon Haiyan so tragically demonstrated,” she explains.

“The public health implications of changed weather patterns and increases in sea levels are significant. We need to start thinking about how we can reduce the health impacts of heat exposure and what new surveillance and response mechanisms we can put in place to deal with the changing distribution and patterns of disease outbreaks.”
Championing mental health_

The Hon Helen Morton MLC

STORY CARMEN REILLY

OVER the course of her career, the Hon Helen Morton MLC has been an advocate for improving Western Australia’s mental health services.

After graduating in 1969 with an Associate Diploma in Occupational Therapy from the Western Australian Institute of Technology (now Curtin University), Helen worked as an occupational therapist, applying her skills in mental health rehabilitation. She witnessed the obstacles facing WA’s mental health services: from limited funding and community treatment and support services, to the isolation of mental health services from other state health systems.

This experience not only prompted her to develop private occupational therapy services in mental health, but also in nursing homes, hotels and day care centres. It was also the start of a lifelong commitment to bettering mental health services in WA.

“Mental health still represents a major public challenge in Western Australia, and that is an area to which I remain strongly committed,” Helen says. “I want to make sure that people with a mental illness are given a fair go.”

To achieve her aims, Helen moved into health management, and over the next 13 years held senior executive positions in health organisations across WA, including roles at the Central Wheatbelt Health Service, Midwest and Gascoyne Health Service, South Metropolitan Health Authority, Department of Health WA, Armadale Health Service, and Kalamunda Community Care.

“Mental health has been my passion and has seen me play an instrumental role in designing, building and managing the full spectrum of public mental health services across the country and metropolitan areas before embarking on a political career,” Helen says.

Currently the Minister for Mental Health, Disability Services and Child Protection, Helen has dedicated her time to reforming mental health services in WA and establishing the Mental Health Commission. This role has also seen her announce the merger of the Drug and Alcohol Office with the Mental Health Commission to ensure better integration of prevention and treatment services in these areas, and introduce the Mental Health Act into parliament in 2013.

“I truly believe that the same personal qualities that motivated me to become an occupational therapist are precisely the same qualities that have driven my political career; I honestly want to see individuals and communities have better outcomes and opportunities,” Helen says.

Setting it straight_Anthony Tran

STORY STEVE PACKER

ANTHONY Tran’s career trajectory changed dramatically in August last year when he went to China on a business internship and was offered a role that plunged him into improving relations between China and Australia on many levels.

Tran is one of four directors of the Australia Property and Education News Foundation, which in October started publishing the free bimonthly magazine, Australia News (AustraliaNews.org.au) for distribution mainly in China but also in South East Asia.

The online and printed magazine is a non-profit venture of UCHK Consulting, whose founder and CEO is Australian businessman and philanthropist Scott O. Talbot. Tran is also UCHK Consulting’s operations manager in China.

“Chinese investors are given a lot of misleading information about Australia,” says Tran, who graduated from Curtin in 2009 with a Bachelor of Commerce [Marketing and Commercial Law]. “They get it from countless agencies and from ... well, they could be called ‘Chinese whispers’.

“It ranges from thinking that we have deadly, unavoidable spiders and snakes all over the place, to important aspects of doing business and getting educated in Australia, and perhaps ultimately migrating to Australia.

“For example, I recently met a Chinese woman who was told she would be able to obtain a business investment visa, enabling her to live in Australia, if she bought a $300,000 house there. But that’s not how that visa works. A minimum of $5 million in investment is needed and there are conditions attached.

“Tran says Australia News, which is published in Mandarin and English, draws on official and other reliable sources of information to “sort things out in black and white”.

He goes to a lot of business and educational functions, expositions and institutions where he can promote the magazine alongside his work for UCHK Consulting.

“I’m trying to learn Mandarin, and it’s a headache after working 12-hour days,” he says. “But I love living in China and meeting the people – especially those who have spent time in Australia and tell me they love it and consider it their second home. Having Chinese students come to Australia forms life-long bonds. As young adults, they learn all about Australian culture and get to appreciate our laid-back nature.”

Tran, who is of Vietnamese descent, is a successful businessman in his own right. When he was just 15 years old, he opened a café next to his mother’s food court stall in Perth, and 11 years ago opened the award-winning restaurant, Kulcha Cafe and Noodle House in Joondalup, where he is still the business development manager.
A sign of things to come

Curtin’s main campus has come alive with a variety of international food and roving performers heralding the start of a 20-year master plan that will transform the university.
Previous page: projection artists have brought the walls to life after dark in the warmer months.

This page, clockwise, from top: Events like orientation have a renewed feeling of vibrancy; flash mobs featuring pipe bands and the Perth Symphony Orchestra have wowed students; and roving performers can be seen almost every day of semester.
Clockwise from left: The Covergirls are part cabaret, part disco; musical acts are a common sight; student participation is a theme with many of the activities springing up; Professor Stelarc has held performances and public lectures showcasing his biomechanical wizardry.
A mentoring program aimed at increasing Indigenous students’ engagement with school and transition to tertiary study is showing signs of success at Curtin just over a year after starting in WA.

STORY FLIP PRIOR

JUST over a year after launching in WA, the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) is transforming the lives of thousands of Aboriginal teenagers.

Reece Harley, AIME’s program director for WA, has watched the program grow from just 25 mentors and a handful of Indigenous students in suburban NSW in 2005 to a national program involving 3,500 mentees and 1,250 mentors.

AIME was developed in response to the fact that only a fraction of Indigenous students followed non-Indigenous peers into tertiary education and their school completion rates to year 12 were much lower.

AIME’s ambition is to see Indigenous students transition to university at the same rate as their non-Indigenous peers and for 100 per cent of AIME students who complete year 12 continue to tertiary education, training or employment.

To achieve that, AIME matches Indigenous students from Year 7 to 12 at schools near Perth, including boarding facilities such as Clontarf, with university mentors drawn across disciplines and different cultural backgrounds.

“It’s reconciliation in action, getting Indigenous and non-Indigenous working together, helping each other out,” Mr Harley says.

A KPMG report found AIME generated AUD $7 of benefits for every $1 spent and that participants finished school and were admitted to university above the national Indigenous average rates.

Students involved from years 9 to 12 were six times more likely to go to university – and if they completed a degree could expect to earn up to AUD $332,000 more over their lifetime than an Indigenous student who did not complete high school.

While AIME is relatively new in WA, mentors and teachers are already reporting higher engagement and participation by children and find them more focused on their future.

A number of Year 12 students from last year’s AIME intake are now enrolled at Curtin.

“The stats are pretty magnificent, to be honest. The impact of the program is undeniable,” Mr Harley says.

Last year the federal government invested AUD $1.2 million in Curtin’s AIME program, to expand staffing numbers and double the number of Indigenous mentees to 250.

In 2014, Curtin’s program is expected to double the number of mentors that signed up in 2013 to more than 150.

Curtin’s Manager of Corporate Values and Equity Mel Henry says AIME is a key plank of Curtin’s Student Equity Strategy to create an inclusive environment supportive of students from all backgrounds.

AIME complements Curtin’s AHEAD program, which raises awareness of tertiary options and develops aspirations among those from low socio-economic areas.

“AIME is a highly successful and important component of Curtin’s equity outreach program that develops Indigenous school students’ positive attitudes towards education and inspirational leadership in Indigenous communities,” Ms Henry says.

“After only a year in the west we can already see it is making a profound difference. Indigenous-run, with inspirational Indigenous leadership, it’s a very powerful and honest program that truly engages and inspires.”

Centre for Aboriginal Studies Director Marion Kickett says the AIME team has settled in well at Curtin and is working closely with Aboriginal staff.

“We are looking at ways our staff can work more closely with the AIME staff and have a big impact on Aboriginal school leavers,” she says.

By 2018, AIME hopes to have 10,000 students and 3,000 mentors. Mr Harley says there are “thousands and thousands” of Indigenous high schools kids to reach in WA and he hopes many more students at Curtin are inspired to get involved.

“We provide mentors with cultural awareness training and they’ll also develop highly desirable professional skills in coaching, motivation and communication… plus they get a free hoodie!” he says.

To learn more and enquire about becoming an AIME mentor, visit aimementoring.com.
WHILE social issues are firmly on the agenda for many organisations, workplace strategies for promoting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) inclusiveness are often overlooked due to perceived irrelevance or difficulty. Curtin’s mindset isn’t clouded by such misconceptions. This year, the Australian Workplace Equality Awards recognised Curtin as Australia’s top university for LGBTI workplace inclusion for the second year running, and ranked it second overall among the nation’s employers. Pride in Diversity, an organisation helping Australian employers develop LGBTI-friendly workplaces, administered the awards.

It’s no accident that Curtin is leading the country in this area of growing importance. At the core of the University’s commitment to LGBTI inclusiveness is the Diverse Sexuality and Gender Identity Inclusion Strategy, developed in 2012 in association with Pride in Diversity.

Curtin’s Ally program also aims to foster an environment inclusive of sexual and gender diversity. Established in 2006, the program trains volunteer staff and students – Allies – who provide support and understanding to Curtin’s LGBTI community. Curtin’s Director of Support Services, Michelle Rogers, chairs the Ally program’s advisory committee. Under her guidance, the program was a runner-up for Pride in Diversity’s LGBTI Employee Network of the Year in 2013 and is now working to embed LGBTI inclusiveness strategies into the University’s planning framework.

Beginning as a Western Australian Institute of Technology (WAIT) student and employed at Curtin for the past nine years, Rogers has witnessed a big difference in Curtin’s attitude towards LGBTI inclusion. “I’ve not only seen senior people come out, providing role models for others, but I’ve also seen how at ease our senior executives and managers are with regard to this so-called issue,” Rogers says.

Rogers also believes Curtin has played a significant role in the wider cultural shift towards LGBTI acceptance in the workplace. “Australian society is becoming more accepting in the public arena, and that is often led by key organisations and companies. Curtin has been one of those organisations that has said, ‘You know what? Everyone’s welcome. We want you for your skills and everything else you have to offer, including who you are.’”

Curtin alumnus and former Guild president Terence Healy agrees, insisting the University was always ahead of its time with regard to LGBTI inclusiveness. “I remember marching [in 2002] in support of the Labor state government’s changes to legislation regarding discrimination against LGBTI people,” Healy says.

“At that time, even just holding hands with someone of the same sex in public was seen as a little bit risky, whereas Curtin was always a safe place whether you were gay or straight.”

It’s this safe and inclusive environment that has had a lasting impact on Healy’s views upon diversity. In December 2013, he officiated Australia’s historic first same-sex marriage between Dennis Liddelow and Stephen Dawson during the ACT’s Marriage Equality Act’s brief life. “I felt [the same-sex marriage legislation] was just absolutely brilliant and I wanted to be a part of it,” he says.

Director of Pride in Diversity Dawn Hough says Curtin has made significant progress towards LGBTI inclusiveness in recent years. “There’s been an enormous amount of work done at a strategic level around sexual orientation, gender identity and diverse employees,” Hough says.

Hough believes many employers still view LGBTI inclusiveness as irrelevant to the workplace, or simply too daunting to tackle. “Because of the number of employers who still think that, the ones who stand up and do something need to be applauded. That’s where the real message of inclusion is coming from,” Hough explains.

“To see the University get up there and rank so highly is an absolute credit to all those involved.”

Curtin and its alumni are gaining national recognition for LGBTI inclusiveness strategies – a commonly misunderstood area gaining traction across Australian workplaces.
Curtin Health Sciences Professor Lynn Meuleners will head the Western Australian component of a joint research program between Curtin-Monash Accident Research Centre (C-MARC) and Monash University Accident Research Centre that aims to improve bicycle safety and reduce injuries to cyclists in the urban environment.

Professor Meuleners, the Director of C-MARC and a lead researcher on the project, said concurrent with an increase in cycling in Australia was a sharp rise in cyclist injuries and fatalities, the majority of which occurred at intersections.

"Until now research into cyclist safety in Australia has focused on behaviour," she said. "Our new study will look closely at the Australian transport system and ways to create a safer cycling environment."

Researchers will use a combination of in-depth bike crash investigations and naturalistic observation of cycling to build datasets that match cyclist behaviour and crash experience, plus feedback from those who have never had a crash, with the actual road environment. Findings from the research could lead to new road designs to make cycling safer for cyclists and drivers.

The Australian Research Council Linkage Project has provided a funding grant of AUD $705,000 for the study.

More than words

Senior Lecturer Dr Iain Murray and PhD student Azadeh Nazemi have developed an affordable digital reading system for people who are blind, allowing them to read more than just words, making graphical material accessible.

The system, which has an expected production cost as low as AUD $100, combines a number of pattern recognition technologies into a single platform and, for the first time, allows mathematics and graphical material to be extracted and described without sighted intervention.

"Many of us take for granted the number of graphics and statistics we see in our daily lives, especially at work. We love to have graphics and diagrams to convey information, for example, look at how many statistics and graphs are used in the sports section of the newspaper," Dr Murray said.

The device works by using pattern recognition technology and other methods on any document to identify images, graphs, maths or text. It is then converted to audio format.

He is now looking for philanthropic finance to set up production. Email i.murray@curtin.edu.au for more information.

Making cycling safer
Non-invasive Down syndrome tests

A new non-invasive test for Down syndrome could boost the detection rate to 99 per cent with less than a 1 per cent false positive result, reducing the need for invasive diagnostic procedures and possible related miscarriages, according to Professor Peter O’Leary from Curtin’s Faculty of Health Sciences.

Down syndrome is the most common chromosome abnormality in humans. Whilst women of any age can have a baby with Down syndrome, the risk increases with age. Pregnant women are currently offered a screening test in their first trimester to estimate the risk of their fetus having Down syndrome.

Those with a higher risk are offered diagnostic testing such as amniocentesis, which is invasive and carries the risk of complications including a small risk of miscarriage.

Professor O’Leary’s study analysed the cost effectiveness of the non-invasive test for Down Syndrome.

The study of 32,478 single baby pregnancies found by including the non-invasive test the number of invasive diagnostic procedures and procedure-related miscarriages would have been reduced by 88 per cent in high-risk women.

“By offering the new non-invasive test to these women, costs could be reduced with fewer amniocentesis tests and less unintended terminations,” Professor O’Leary said.

The test is currently available only in the private health sector in Australia.

The real costs of WA housing

Western Australians on low incomes are being severely affected by lack of housing affordability according to the second major report from the Bankwest Curtin Economic Centre, The Real Costs of Housing in Western Australia, released in April.

The result shows many home owners and renters are paying excessively high shares of income and live a considerable distance from their desired living location, workplace and family support.

Centre Director Professor Alan Duncan said unlike other reports, this report reflected the true picture of housing affordability in WA as it combined traditional measures of affordability with microeconomic measures to reveal housing stress for different groups in the WA population, including lower income earners, sole parent families and older renters.

“Our survey indicates that many Western Australians suffer from mortgage and rental stress and are forced to compromise on other expenditures to meet the high housing costs in WA,” he said.

Those living with parents or in group housing in order to save for a house deposit showed an average shortfall of $29,000. To make up the gap, an individual on a gross income of $70,000 would have to save 10 per cent of their net income for five years.

Above: Professor Alan Duncan

up_coming events

After Afghanistan: Ben Quilty’s portraits will be on show from 2 August – 14 September at the John Curtin Gallery.

JOHN CURTIN GALLERY
Ben Quilty: After Afghanistan
2 August - 14 September 2014

Ben Quilty’s portraits of Australian servicemen and women are imbued with their experience of war. They express the dangers the soldiers encountered in Afghanistan, and the complex emotions they felt on returning home.

Tel: +61 8 9266 4155
johncurtingallery.curtin.edu.au

Markets under the pines
First Sunday of every month

Situated on Curtin’s picturesque grounds under the pine trees, you can stroll through the many stalls showcasing local produce, sumptuous food and innovative artisans’ creations. There’s plenty of entertainment for the kids too, with an animal farm, pony and train rides. Free parking and entry.

news.curtin.edu.au/events/markets-under-the-pines

TEDx Perth
4 October 2014

For the second consecutive year, Curtin is the principal partner of the TEDx Perth event, to be held at the Perth Concert Hall in October. The event brings together some of the most inspiring thinkers and speakers in the state, to present on a broad range of topics spanning science and culture.

tedxperth.com

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tedxperth.com

Above: Professor Alan Duncan
Building the University’s research profile, leveraging its international reach and nurturing stakeholder engagement will be priorities of her leadership, says Professor Deborah Terry.

I WAS attracted to Curtin because of its strong positioning in the higher education sector. Curtin has a very well-deserved reputation for being an outwardly focused international university, with a number of significant areas of research strength and a strong commitment to teaching and learning quality. It also has a clearly articulated ambition to become a research-intensive university, an ambition that I think is achievable.

International rankings are largely based on research strength, so if Curtin is to realise its vision of becoming a leading international university by 2030, a more comprehensive research agenda is essential. I am also very much aware of the importance of ensuring that our students experience high-quality teaching programs and that they have access to a rich and well-rounded university experience. Higher education is now extremely competitive and the very best universities value, reward and celebrate excellence in both research and teaching. Because they are inextricably linked, my leadership will focus on both areas.

IN the current climate, vice-chancellors increasingly need to be externally focused. I see this as a key priority – to build strong and highly engaged links with our major government, industry, and business stakeholders as well as with our alumni. In Australia, significant policy reform for higher education is clearly on the agenda, and the announcements in the recent federal budget signal very significant changes. Curtin will be consulting broadly as we formulate our response to the budget, which will need to ensure that the future success of the University is compatible with our distinctive strengths, our mission and our values.

Ensuring we continue to support a diverse student body and deliver high-quality research outcomes will be essential. As an institution, Curtin has some remarkable assets. The Western Australian School of Mines, as just one example, is a major area of expertise within Curtin and a significant resource for both industry and government. The strength of Curtin’s international footprint is also a tremendous achievement. I’ve recently returned from visiting our Sarawak Campus, which is celebrating its 15-year anniversary this year. I look forward to building on this success to broaden the mobility options for our students and to enhance our educational and research profile in East Malaysia.

Another initiative I look forward to supporting and developing is Curtin’s proposal to establish a medical school. We have expertise in training high-quality allied health graduates who have a strong focus on primary care, as well as a growing reputation for translational health research. We hope to use this expertise to train doctors in an effort to help address the GP shortage in this state.

I’m also excited by the vision for Greater Curtin. Being able to transform our Bentley Campus into a more vibrant and welcoming physical environment that attracts other research-related entities and provides more accommodation options for students and visiting staff will position Curtin very well for the future. At the same time, it will build Bentley’s profile as a major knowledge hub in Perth.

UNIVERSITIES are essential to the future success and prosperity of countries like Australia, and I am privileged to be in a leadership position at a university such as Curtin. I am passionate about higher education, and look forward to building on the achievements of my predecessors to further develop Curtin’s profile and reputation.

After almost 20 years in a leadership position at a research-intensive university on the east coast of Australia, I’m excited about bringing my experience to Curtin, and to working closely with our talented and committed staff and students to realise our vision.
Curtin University is Western Australia’s largest and most diverse university. Curtin strives for excellence in teaching, and offers a wide range of courses in business, engineering and science, minerals and energy, sustainable development, health sciences and humanities.

The University is committed to building world-class research capability through partnerships with business, industry, government and community organisations. Curtin has a growing international presence, with an offshore campus in Sarawak, East Malaysia, and with Curtin Singapore, and runs offshore programs in six countries.

The University is named after John Curtin, prime minister of Australia from 1941 to 1945, and strives to honour his values of vision, leadership and community service.

Vision_2030
A recognised international leader in research and education.

Our_mission
To change minds, lives and the world through leadership, innovation and excellence in teaching and research.

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There are many ways to make a difference to people’s lives. Through the Curtin University Foundation, Curtin staff are getting behind initiatives that support students through higher education.

Curtin strives to meet global challenges by supporting practical research and teaching, and creating solutions for healthy, sustainable and successful societies. Donations to the Curtin University Foundation help today’s brightest minds make tomorrow better.

To find out more, visit give.curtin.edu.au.