Racism
why Australia is a contradiction

The Peter Pan generation
adults who don’t grow up

Backyard science
fostering our new scientists

The transformers
Meet Peter Brew-Bevan
and other graduates who shape our world
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Ranked 6th in the recent 2009 survey, this is the 4th successive year in which the University of South Australia is a “Top 10” MBA in Australia as ranked by the Australian Financial Review’s BOSS Magazine.

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The Transformers
The power of design in our lives might not always be obvious but it’s at the heart of the work of three creative UniSA alumni who turn ordinary things into the unforgettable.

Advance a fair Australia
Australia was built by migrants yet politicians continue to push policies to keep people out. Dr Peter Gale explores the nation’s conflicting race and migrant issues.

Research: Q&A
As head of UniSA’s ErgoLab, Dr Gunther Paul is working to make products better fit the people who use them.

Stimulating student science
Schools look to new programs to give students hands-on science learning.

The Peter Pan generation
More Australians are delaying adulthood, instead opting for the comforts of home with Mum and Dad. UniSA experts talk about this new generation.

In Focus: Q&A
Students love getting a call from Jo Sharp – she manages UniSA’s 100 scholarships and has the rewarding job of letting them know they’ve won a scholarship.

New Leaf
Featuring five new books from the UniSA community.
The University of 2010 is exposed to competitive elements

Among many there would be an outdated view that universities are cushioned institutions that sit back to see how many students and how much funding they receive. This perception could not be further from the reality of contemporary universities, which are highly complex businesses totally exposed to market forces.

This is one reason why universities are frequent sponsors of events and highly engaged with their communities. UniSA has sponsored the Tour Down Under for 10 years, and is now sponsoring other events such as the Pedal Prix, the Adelaide Festival, and the South Australian Debating Association’s Schools Competition.

These have become even more important now that the Federal Government has implemented the Bradley Review which links funding much more closely to student demand. In 2009, 65 per cent ($330m) of the University’s consolidated revenue was derived from teaching Australian and international students. A further 16 per cent ($76m) came from competitive research and consultancy.

Essentially, all university income is now contestable. Something like one-third of the one million students in Australian higher education are citizens of other countries. They contribute approximately 20 per cent of universities’ total income.

The economic contribution they make to the broader economy is even larger. It has been estimated that a 5 per cent drop in international student numbers in Australia would equate to about 6000 jobs lost. International students also build global cultural and business links from which Australia derives great benefits – there are many senior business people and government officials in Asia who studied in Australia. International education is one of Australia’s highest performing service industries, and this is why particular care needs to be taken to protect Australia’s market share.

The international student market has been hard won, but Australia’s success is being emulated around the world in countries like Canada and New Zealand, and in Europe and Asia. To give just two examples, Japanese universities are opening English language programs and the Canadian government has indicated that attracting international students is a high priority.

Export enterprises can be adversely affected by conditions outside their control. Recently Australian universities have been hit by the ‘perfect storm’:

- Allegations of racist attacks on Indian students
- The dollar’s increased value
- The US re-entering international student education because of a collapse of university finances in the US
- Uncertainties about skilled migration lists, and
- Changed visa practices by the Federal Department of Immigration and Citizenship

In this environment we could well see the income from international student education severely dented. This would not only affect the operations and the size of universities, but have flow-on effects to the wider economy.

While universities undoubtedly will be able to adjust to these new conditions, it would be preferable if we learned how to anticipate the controllable factors that may not only diminish the fortunes of universities as service exporters, but also deprive Australian society of the economic, cultural and intellectual riches that international students bring to the community.

You are out for dinner at a fashionable local restaurant. The food is fabulous, the conversation is flowing along with the wine – so it is highly unlikely that you will have thought about your food beyond its immediate taste.

You probably have not imagined where it is grown, thought about the men and women who have worked to bring the product to table, the histories of their communities and the cultural significance of food as it is woven through our daily lives.

But according to Professor Elspeth Probyn, it all matters.

As Director of UniSA’s Hawke Institute, Prof Probyn has set a new research agenda squarely focused on our regional communities and the complex elements that will keep them surviving and thriving in a globalised economy.

A key part of that research is examining the links in the food production chain — not simply the physical and technical processes involved in turning grapes into a fine Shiraz or tuna into sushi — but also the cultures that sustain these industries.

“I hope to build a wealth of research at the Institute that will help us develop a consciousness of our regional communities that goes much deeper than an economic analysis of their contribution to the State,” Prof Probyn says.

“I want to do that in part by understanding more clearly the relationships between taste and place especially around key SA foods and regions.”

Prof Probyn argues that it is often the emotional and cultural aspects of an industry that play a vital role in its sustainability.

“Family traditions of being on the land or sea that stretch back generations are potent and often transcend continents, as is the case with some of the leading fishing families in Port Lincoln,” she says. “Some of the most successful tuna industry families trace their roots back to a Croatian fishing village — Kali — where today these second generation Australian-Croats are establishing the innovative fish-farming technologies they developed here in Australia.

“These socio-cultural relationships with food production can’t be overlooked.”

Prof Probyn is undertaking an ethnographic study of the tuna industry in Port Lincoln, and has previously done some research into Cowell’s oyster farming operations. In close consultation with regional communities, she says have been incredibly open and interested in the work, her research will ultimately include an examination of wine production in SA as well.

“What is quite clear is that regional communities do not necessarily have a key relationship with the capital of Adelaide. In Cowell for example, where the local school owns two of its own oyster farm licences and uses oyster farming as a key learning and teaching opportunity for its students, the relationship with international buyers is direct.

“Similarly, regions like the Barossa are building direct relationships with consumers in China where the taste for wines is becoming increasingly more sophisticated and intense as China’s growing middle class develops its palate.”

In consultation with key local identities in the Barossa, including Maggie Beer and Yalumba’s Cecil Camilleri, Prof Probyn has just held workshops in the region to explore a range of issues around food culture, agricultural production and the community.

She says under pressure and scrutiny, humans’ relationship with the planet — issues around food security, global economics and politics and climate change — will also continue to impact food industries and the communities that support production.

“The impact of last year’s ruling to reduce fishing quotas for the Southern Bluefin tuna is just one example of the kind of global factors that can impact a community like Port Lincoln,” she says.

“In response, Prest a Manger, the huge fresh, “clean” international fast food chain has taken all tuna off its menus — menus that inevitably would have included Australian tuna.

“These moves have an impact not only on the supply chain but the values chain embedded in the industry as a whole — they flow on into the lives of the Port Lincoln community but also into the social politics of the food we buy and consume.

“It is in understanding these complex interactions and relationships that we hope to build more informed approaches to regional development that are sustainable in the fullest sense.”

Michele Nardelli
The transformers

IF YOU’VE ever marvelled at the hypnotic folds of the Sydney Opera House, fallen in love with a photograph, or bought a vase so beautiful it’s too good to use, then you’ve been touched by design. And though you might not know it, there is an entire creative community that takes these seemingly ordinary things and makes them unforgettable.

Remember the names of UniSA graduates Paul Hecker, Peter Brew-Bevan and Steven Blaess. Their works are transforming the way we live, eat, work, think – and so much more. Take Hecker, who graduated with a degree in Interior Design in the mid-1980s and is now co-director of his own interior and furniture design firm, Melbourne-based, Hecker, Phelan & Guthrie. Hecker, the man, is as fascinating as his decadent interiors. He confesses that his life is focused on aesthetics – in homes, shops, bars, clubs, and the place you have your cappuccino. Even his own appearance does not escape a once over.

Of all his works, Hecker’s first major project – designing the interiors for Melbourne’s Crown Casino, is what he regards as the most influential in his career. “I had total creative freedom,” he says. “And it was the first project I had worked on where the interiors were perceived as being as, if not more important, than the exteriors.”

When Hecker creates a space, he asks clients not how they want it to look, but how they want it to feel. “I was at one point working on a project I had worked on where the interiors were perceived as being as, if not more important, than the exteriors.”

“A room can be completely transformational – it can calm you, make you feel. That’s the power of design. And next time you flick through a magazine, pick up your coffee cup, or enter a room, think not about what it looks like, but how it makes you feel. That’s the power of design.”

Hecker, Brew-Bevan and Blaess are all reference the creative community in which they studied as a major influence on their careers. Many of their teachers remain at UniSA’s Louis Laybourne Smith School of Art, Architecture and Design, though it has undergone a transformation of its own since their graduation. Its history dates back more than 150 years, but it officially amalgamated the three different creative streams last year.

Head of School, Professor Mads Gaardboe, says that the aim was to establish a creative community, with similarities to the early 20th century Bauhaus School in Germany. “Artists, architects and designers can all learn from each other,” he says.

“Many courses are structured so that students participate in integrated classes, where for example, an architecture student can work alongside an industrial design student. It expands the ways of thinking about design.”

It’s these new ways of thinking that are shaping our world. Consider what your life might look like without artists, architects and designers.

And next time you flick through a magazine, pick up your coffee cup, or enter a room, think not about what it looks like, but how it makes you feel. That’s the power of design.

Heather Leggett


**With a Federal election around the corner and issues around racism in sport, abuse against international students and the continuing debate over how we handle refugees and asylum seekers all in the headlines, what does our history tell us about racism in Australia?**

The truth is, it’s a mixed bag.

Dr Gale says in the first half of the 20th century it is clear that the definition of a suitable entrant to Australia was limited in colour – both of one’s skin and one’s politics. Fast forward to 2006 and migrants to Australia were facing a new test. The return to “Australian values” championed by former Prime Minister John Howard had refugees and migrants from all corners of the globe quizzed about the history of Australia before they could be welcomed as citizens. The Citizenship Test asked them for the name of Australia’s finest cricketer and other tidbits – quite possibly no questions about our Indigenous history.

The test has since been modified by the current Labor Government. The election of the Liberal Howard Government, Pauline Hanson’s One Nation Party and mandatory detention have contributed to a new wave of anti-immigration sentiment and controversy in Australia.

The irony, says Dr Gale, is that racism continues to be evident in contemporary Australia when more than 60 per cent of all Australians were either born overseas, or had one or both parents or grandparents born overseas.

“Australia is a contradiction,” he says.

“In many ways our nation was built by migrants of all varieties. We can justifiably point to a pretty good record in accepting refugees and playing a strong role in supporting important changes such as the end of Apartheid in South Africa.”

“At the same time we have an appalling record of racism against our own Indigenous people and the violence and racial hatred evident at the Cronulla riots in 2001 and towards Muslim refugees after the September 11 attack on the World Trade Centre is very real.”

Dr Gale says political leadership and policy have a significant impact on racial tensions.

“It is interesting to contrast the political leadership shown in the 1970s during the arrival of boat refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia with the approach taken in the first 10 years of this century.

“Back then the support given to new arrivals from Vietnam was politically bipartisan and the whole mindset was to find ways to help a group of people who were clearly understood to be escapees from a war torn environment – a war in which Australia was a participant.”

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**Continued next page...**

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**RACE MATTERS 1600 – 2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1600</td>
<td>First European contact – Indigenous population about 750,000.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>Terra nullius legal doctrine of terra nullius.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>First large group of Indigenous people were forcibly relocated to missions and reserves.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>Gold discovered in NSW.</td>
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<td>1852</td>
<td>First forcible removal of Indigenous children from their families.</td>
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<td>1869</td>
<td>Alexander MacArthur begins to implement restriction on Indigenous marriage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>170,000 immigrants arrive in Australia – the largest racial group to come to the goldfields (40,000) are Chinese. Most return to China by the turn of the century.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1880s</td>
<td>Australian colonies pass restrictive legislation to prohibit migration of Chinese.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Immigration Restriction Act 1901.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Australia welcomes 1200 Chinese refugees from Nazi Germany.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>The test has since been modified by the current Labor Government.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>The election of the Liberal Howard Government, Pauline Hanson’s One Nation Party and mandatory detention have contributed to a new wave of anti-immigration sentiment and controversy in Australia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>September 11 terrorist attack in the USA. Australia also passes The Migration Amendment (Consequential Provisions) Act 2001, a bill which leads to the introduction of mandatory detention of asylum seekers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Australia's population was a mere 3.7 million. About three quarters of those Australians were born here. The rest were from the UK and, in relatively tiny proportions, Europe and Asia. Sadly history shows no one bothered to count the numbers of Indigenous Australians. Most of them had already been restricted to missions and reserves – tucked away out of sight. With no strain on resources, no modern fear of the economic burden of an ageing population and an incremental student admissions shortage, it’s interesting that one of the first acts of the freshly formed Federal Parliament was to keep people out.</td>
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**JUST over 100 years ago Australia’s population was a mere 3.7 million. About three quarters of those Australians were born here. The rest were from the UK and, in relatively tiny proportions, Europe and Asia. Sadly history shows no one bothered to count the numbers of Indigenous Australians. Most of them had already been restricted to missions and reserves – tucked away out of sight. With no strain on resources, no modern fear of the economic burden of an ageing population and an incremental student admissions shortage, it’s interesting that one of the first acts of the freshly formed Federal Parliament was to keep people out.**

This first dip into a national policy that would restrict migration on the basis of race was the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 – the foundation legislation for what was to become known as the White Australia Policy. Modelled on an Act already in place in South Africa, it prohibited entry for the usual suspects – the mentally ill, the prostitutes, people with infectious diseases and criminal records – but it also introduced a controversial dictation test, a 50 word comprehension exercise which could be given in any European language. Senior lecturer in Australian Studies at UniSA, Dr Peter Gale says the test was a device designed to keep out people of certain racial backgrounds while seeking to avoid the explicit use of race and colour as exclusion factors. So a Maltese migrant may have been given the test in German or Dutch, a Chinese visitor might expect it in Italian or Flemish.

But the exercise met its own test when in 1938, the multilingual, Czechoslovakian Jew, Ergon Kisch, a communist intellectual visiting Australia, passed with flying colours in several languages. Finally to ensure his exclusion he was set the test in Scottish Gaelic. The decision was successfully challenged in the High Court and found to be “not within the fair meaning of the Act.”
“We took political and practical responsibility for the human outcomes of the Vietnam war – there was assistance given to settle, including government-sponsored housing and education support. There was a recognition that the path for refugees would ultimately be citizenship.

“Contrast the treatment of Iraqi and Afghan refugees again fleeing from countries at war – wars where Australia sent troops, and the story is not positive. They were treated with suspicion and often held in detention for many years before eventually being released and then billed by the government for their incarceration expenses.”

Dr Gale says governments that can create a sense of an external enemy, can bank on electoral stability.

He says in recent years Australia has fallen a long way behind in helping and often held in detention for many years before eventually being released and then billed by the government for their incarceration expenses.

“We cannot continue to be the country of the ‘fair go’ if our leadership fails to be fair. Issues of race are always complicated – they are bound up in economics and international political alliances.

“However, history shows a lot can be done to mitigate the sense of otherness that inspires racial hatred. If we trace our record we can see there have been times of great harmony, acceptance and international leadership towards peace and justice and there have been periods of violence, injustice and genuine racial tension.

“Where Indigenous Australians are considered there have been few periods of great hope. We should remember that at every stage, our leaders have a choice in how they drive policy and social attitudes – to harness our fears or our fairness.”

Michelle Mandelli

The view from outside in

When Harpinder Chhipa arrived in Adelaide two years ago from Siliguri near Darjeeling, to undertake a MBA at UniSA, he confesses he hadn’t done his homework.

“I had limited background information on Australia and I had not read much about the place,” he admits.

“I had made my choice about study based on the reputation of the program and the fact that I had an aunt in Adelaide.”

Now with the degree under his belt and some lived experience of working and studying here he believes Australia is definitely not a racist country.

“The rider is that much like everywhere else, he knows there are racist people here.

“Fortunately I was raised a Sikh so I wear the turban although I am an atheist, but it means I am identifiably different. I actually never thought about being careful because I thought - this is Australia - it’s a safe place.

“I have had some little kids yell something about the Talibans at me and one night a few drunks had a bit of a go at me when I was in the city coming home late from classes, but I managed that ultimately by walking away.

“Drunk Australians are much like drunk Indians – I was just a bit surprised by the big drinking culture here.”

Harpinder says a lot of Indians assume that Australia, the UK, Canada, and the US are more or less the same.

“It is not until you get to a country that you notice the cultural differences. In India the friction factors revolve around religion and to some extent caste and wealth. Here it seems that if friction arises, race or culture is the flash point.

“It seems to me the same things can happen in India or Australia – just in different proportions.”

Qualified in commerce, and now a MBA, with experience in his family’s business and some big multinational companies in India such as DELL, Harpinder has taken on some very different part-time work.

“Because I have language skills – English, Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali and a little Urdu - I’m working for the Department of Education and Children’s Services as a bilingual school services officer for the various primary schools and I am really enjoying it,” he says.

“My goal is to work in the finance sector as a market analyst but this work with children to help them fit into their new schools in an often very different environment, is really enjoyable. Many of them are refugees so the service is important.”

Ultimately, Harpinder hopes to stay.

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Born in Germany, Dr Paul moved to Australia in 2005 to join UniSA’s Mawson Institute. Now he is Director of UniSA’s ErgoLab, a research facility dedicated to enhancing the field of ergonomics – where products are designed to better fit the people that use them. Dr Paul plays a major role in ergonomic studies from automotive design, to assistive technologies for the elderly and disabled.

He currently supervises several PhD students and regularly consults to industry.

What are you researching?

Ergonomic product design, or to put it in other words, how we interact with machinery, vehicles, tools, instruments – virtually any product we use.

What attracted you to this research field?

When studying engineering, I was surprised to see that everything I learned was focused on designing the technical properties of objects. There was very little space for a human perspective, and it seemed to me that a part of the picture was missing – until my ergonomics professor introduced me to the laws of labour science.

Ever since I have been fascinated by the potential benefits of ergonomic product design, and filled with the wish to improve our quality of life by helping designers and engineers better understand workforce and user requirements in general.

How do you hope to make a difference?

Human centred workplace and product design makes a difference in many ways – it reduces strain and helps avoid pain, minimises hazards, makes products more enjoyable and comfortable, improves the economy of working processes and is ecologic by preventing the manufacture of products which become waste after one use. I personally hope to make a difference at various levels.

At ErgoLab we collaborate with small and medium biomedical companies to support their product design, and we develop ergonomic design rules for broader application jointly with automotive industrial partners.

And, as a member of Standards Australia and ISO, I contribute to the development of ergonomic standards for the wider public.

Realistically, our most significant contribution might be the development of computer tools, like human models to support ergonomic product development, as those will integrate into existing engineering systems and help designers and developers to do a better job.

What’s most fascinating about the work?

It’s all around us. Ergonomics can improve so many aspects of life, not only the workplace.

I’ve learned to critically reflect on the design of door handles, light switches, scissors or lids of jars – all the way to chairs, working desks, telephones, vehicles – ergonomics is everywhere – and amazingly, it never takes long to find a product that needs improvement.

What is the most rewarding aspect of the work and the most frustrating?

I love to work in applied science, especially in an international environment, where the results of my work are tangible for a wide audience.

When I drove the freshly released Ford Focus CMAX for the first time, which featured an all-new centre stack gear-shifter position which I had designed, the feeling was overwhelming. It’s great to see how ergonomically enhanced products improve people’s quality of life.

The downside after more than 50 years of work in ergonomic research is that ergonomically designed products are still mostly a fortune coincidence rather than a normal expectation for users and customers.

What has been a career highlight?

The exceptional professional opportunity provided by the Mawson Institute, AutoCRC and the Department of Trade and Economic Development, to build a unique ergonomics lab (ErgoLab) and develop a research team of future ergonomists at UniSA according to my wishes. Although I very much enjoyed collaborating with enthusiastic researchers and students at universities across Europe and working with highly skilled world-class engineers at Ford and Daimler, the freedom I enjoy in my current work to drive developments is definitely my career highlight.

What are your goals for the next year?

Suffer less from the weekly team soccer event, have more time to travel with my family to enjoy the splendid countryside, consolidate last year’s work, successfully deliver our first projects with industry and business partners and most of all – see my staff and higher degree by research students make their next steps towards wonderful careers as future ergonomists.

Any advice for new researchers?

Talk to people, ask the right questions, read and fully understand all aspects of a problem. Solve the problem next. Then deduce the laws and know how that will drive innovation. Be yourself — never copy others! Always work in an ergonomic work environment — don’t forget to eat regularly and take a break every Sunday.

Dr Gunther Paul is a Senior Research Fellow at UniSA’s Mawson Institute and is Director of the ErgoLab.

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Dr Gunther Paul
Stimulating student science

Digging for worms in the backyard, catching grasshoppers with bare hands, cultivating an ant farm, trying to grow an apple tree from the fruit’s core – kids are certainly no strangers to hands-on interaction with nature. Or at least, that’s how it used to be.

But with the increasing popularity of digital toys and gadgets, educators are looking for new ways to involve kids in their backyard environment.

For the past three years, school teachers have been taking part in UniSA’s citizen science project, run by the Barbara Hardy Centre for Sustainable Urban Environments, as an interactive science project that gives students an opportunity to submit data that contributes to a scientific project. In this case, they are contributing to what we know about the urban ecology of Adelaide.

Each year, the project focuses on one animal which the community is encouraged to observe in their local area and report back their findings. Last year it was Operation Magpie, this year it will be Operation Spider, starting on September 1. However, school teachers can access materials online now to begin projects.

Kathy Paige, a senior lecturer with UniSA’s School of Education who focuses on science and maths education in years three to nine, has been involved with the school education aspects of the citizen science project, along with other colleagues. She says feedback about the project from teachers is overwhelmingly positive.

“They are really excited by it,” she said. “They get to see their students becoming involved in their local communities, spending time outside, sitting, hearing and seeing. The students say they feel like real scientists.”

While some might say that projects like this is important to develop the next generation of scientists, Dr Paige believes it’s bigger than that.

“It’s about children understanding how our world works and understanding their place in it and their impact on it. “I think it’s a positive way to get them excited. It’s very important for children to have a sense of belonging to their ‘place’ and for them to be able to make sense of their world.

“It is also just physically good for them to spend time outside, get their hands dirty and discover worlds beyond the laptop.”

Raw native plants only allowed

“I want them to be doing real science. This project is an opportunity for students to be part of ground-breaking research.”

The plant research has now been incorporated into subjects at Stuart High School and close to 40 students are involved.

“Horticultural students are looking at how easy it is to propagate plants from cuttings, and then what response the plants have to different soil types and different watering regimes,” Prof Griesser said.

“The findings will help to form the basis for a horticultural industry. It could culminate in a new rural industry for the Whyalla area.

“In the science class, students look at leaf pieces – exposing them to bacteria to see how active they are.

“The plant leaves form a way or sticky covering that protects them against losing too much water. It’s that sticky covering that actually contains the anti-bacterial properties, so giving the plant lots of water might actually change its anti-bacterial properties.

“Very little is known about the plants so this project is all about finding out how to get the best from them.”

UniSA Research Fellow Susan Semple is working on the microbiology involved with the Eremophila project. She hopes that the research will lead to the development of a viable new coating for biomedical devices that are implanted into patients.

She explains that the anti-bacterial properties of the Eremophila plants could provide a permanent coating on such products, reducing the likelihood of infection, compared to current products which are not permanent and rely on common anti-bacterials to which people may have built up a resistance.

Prof Griesser is now working to establish similar partnerships with other schools to help find out more about the other three Eremophila plants.

“Anything we can do to get students involved is good – it’s great for them to become so excited by science.”

Prof Griesser said.

Katrina Kalleiok

There is no doubt that we need a diversified approach to secure our long-term water security in South Australia, as well as the rest of Australia. The fact is, conventional water sources that are rain-dependent, like dams and rivers, are not reliable enough to secure our water supply. We need to find alternative replenishment technologies because we cannot continue to depend on the weather for our water. It would be dangerous to put all our eggs in one basket.

It is also important for our future water supply that people continue to use water efficiently. “We are trying to improve brackish water desalination technology, and also looking at issues such as how to make effective use of waste brine from desalination processes. UniSA is an active research partner of the National Centre of Excellence in Desalination and Water Quality Research Australia, supporting national competitive leading edge research in desalination and water recycling,” said Dr Zou.

Just like computers were once bulky, expensive machines that became more user-friendly and demand grew, so too will water technology develop extensively into the future. Australia is one of the driest countries in the world. We can’t afford to overlook any options that could secure our future water supply.
In 1904 when JM Barrie conceived Peter Pan, a boy locked in the wild delights of childhood — devil-may-care, cocky, spending his days chasing adventure and with a resolute desire to remain childlike — the joy of the story lay in its contrast to reality. But it seems for many Australians growing up today, the flight to Neverland, in a bid to delay adulthood, may be entirely unnecessary, as people in their 20s and 30s become increasingly known as the “stay-at-home” generation. Not only are they delaying marriage and children, they are living with their parents for much longer, even going on holidays with them (at their parents’ expense), and trading what was the traditional determination to strike out on their own, for the more dependent comforts of living with Mum and Dad. Figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics showed that in 2006, 23 per cent of 20–34-year-olds were living at home with their parents. Between 1986 and 2006, the number of young women living at home increased by 36 per cent, while the increase for young men was 16 per cent.

Some social commentators have labelled them the Peter Pan generation because of their apparent preference for delaying the responsibilities of adulthood. UniSA experts believe a number of factors are shaping this social phenomenon.

Popular culture expert, Dr Jackie Cook from UniSA’s School of Communication, International Studies and Languages, says the concept of "lost" boys and girls hanging out on life’s milestones in a different and delayed timeframe." is something we have produced this new cohort that is taking an increased pressure to find solutions to the problem of living at home."

"Dr Cook says the increase in house prices has also pushed up rental prices, so the capacity people had in the 1970s and 80s to rent a house or share the rent with friends is now comparatively much more difficult. "So these economic pressures mean young people, even if they are working, are increasingly living at home," she says.

And young people are happier living at home because parents often allow them a social life, including a sex life, in the family home. "Try doing that in the 1960s and you’d have been out on your ear! Sexual attitudes have changed, and that really means one of the great motivators for moving out of home has disappeared. "But it’s also to do with the family home itself, which often has been renovated to include an ensuite bathroom and an entertainment area — and all in a location which is reasonably urban and central."

"I think it’s true that many young people today don’t want to buy their first property in the outer suburbs and ‘upgrade’ their way back in — no-one wants to do that anymore because they lose the café society, the music gigs, the lifestyle — and they know it."

"Effectively what we’re looking at is something that’s happened without much planning and without much discussion or commentary. Families are making a perfectly rational set of decisions to find solutions to the problems young people face — but these solutions have produced this new cohort that is taking on the responsibilities of living in a different and delayed timeframe.”

And in Western societies there has been growing acceptance of the idea of delaying independent adulthood to the late 30s. In fact, the European Social Survey’s research project, Attitudes to Age in the UK and Europe found that respondents believe youth continues through to age 36.

UniSA sociologist Dr Harry Savelsberg says Australia’s ageing population is also reshaping attitudes towards growing old.

"The fact that we have a growing elderly population means that what we see as old will change, and therefore what people might see as youth or middle age will change in relation to that," he says.

"It’s projected that by the middle of this century, a quarter of the Australian population will be over the age of 65. The median age in South Australia now is 39 (ABS data 2008), but compare that to many African countries where the median age is the high teens or low 20s. In Africa, 30 might not seem young, but it certainly does in Australia."

"What you consider old is going to be relative to the particular population with which you compare. The concept of youth is attitudinal and demography certainly matters when you have a big population cohort like the Baby Boomers, who are the demographic benchmark for our society and who largely determine some of our attitudes to what constitutes young, old and in between."

Dr Savelsberg agrees that the transition from economic dependence to independence is far more protracted for young people today. And he believes staying at home does not necessarily mean young people have less emotional or social maturity.

"Rather than spending every cent on renting and undergoing financial hardship, many young people are living comfortably at home instead," he says.

"Smaller family size makes this tenable as young people are only ‘sharing’ the home with parents, and at most one or two other siblings. Back in the 1960s–70s average family size was three or four children, rather than the one or two children today."

Looking for an expert? Go to www.unisa.edu.au/mdu/media/expert.asp...
Grown up... are we there yet?

In the original version of Peter Pan, the lost boys return home to their mothers and the call of adulthood cannot be postponed forever. But in today’s society, entry into adulthood has become more gradual, complex, and important, according to Dr Janet Bryan from UniSA’s School of Psychology, Social and Health Policy.

Dr Bryan researches executive functioning across the lifespan and says there is neuropsychological evidence for the term “emerging adulthood.” Coined by US academic Jeffrey Arnett, emerging adulthood is characterised as a developmental stage between 18 and 25 years of age.

“It’s a time when people are focused on themselves and their own identity and a time of possibility and shifting choices,” Dr Bryan says. “In 2007 one of my Honours students (Jemma Gates) completed a study to discover how young Australians perceived adulthood. They asked them whether they felt they were adults yet.”

“Their response was they felt they were in the process of becoming adults rather than already being adults. They characterised being an adult as someone who had finished their tertiary education, had a job, was responsible for other people such as younger children, and that they were growing into their identity and a time of possibility and shifting choices,” Dr Bryan says.

In effect, what we’ve done, particularly with families producing their own solutions is invent a new category of young adult, beyond the teenager — just as we did when the teenagers emerged in the 1950s — but it has no name. And it’s built on consuming, not producing,” she says.

“What is interesting is what’s going to happen next. We’ve got a very large cohort of the workforce, the Baby Boomers, about to enter their retirement decade and that group has traditionally downsized, moving from a big family home to a smaller family home.

“But some families are starting to invest in restructuring the family home yet again. They’ll reverse the young adult living in say the smaller bedroom with a small living space of their own, to move into the main part of the house and the parents moving into the studio or skinny flat. So there will continue to be two generations but they will swap spots in the home.”

In addition, the prefrontal cortex has extensive connections to the limbic system of the brain which is responsible for emotional responses. Therefore the protracted development of the prefrontal cortex may in turn explain the increased risk of inappropriate emotional responses increases, which in turn may serve to decrease such behaviours as impulsivity, risk taking and inappropriate displays of negative emotions such as anger and aggression.

“The developmental trajectory of these behaviours may in turn explain the reduction in risky social behaviour, such as substance abuse and criminal activity that occurs during the late 20s.”

Dr Bryan says other UniSA Honours students had conducted studies which showed executive functioning increased during emerging adulthood among young Australians.

“So it certainly does seem that there is a period of emerging adulthood that is grounded in executive development,” she says.

“But a point to consider is whether individuals need to have developed neuropsychologically before maturity can develop, or whether experiences like gaining full-time employment, leaving home, getting married and having children fosters brain development.”

“It’s another interesting research question – we don’t know what had been found previously and what had been found previously and what was new.”

Kelly Stone

ACHIEVEMENTS

Rewards of sleep

Dr Sibhan Banks has been recognised internationally for her sleep research. In June she was presented with the American Academy of Sleep Medicine’s 2010 Young Investigator Award.

The award was for her abstract that examined the effect of sleep loss and different amounts of recovery sleep, on people’s sleep quality.

“The study was designed to focus on all aspects of recovery from chronic sleep restriction,” Dr Banks said.

“The results were now compared to what had been previously seen and this study impacted theoretical perspectives on the recovery from sleep loss.”

Dr Banks wrote the abstract on data that she collected while she was at the University of Pennsylvania from 2004-2009.

Unisa is helping an Australian company produce innovative lightweight automotive mirrors that are expected to corner around eight percent of the global market.

SMR Automotive Australia has won a $2.4 million Green Car Innovation Fund grant from the Federal Government to set up a pilot plant in Adelaide to adapt leading-edge technology to manufacture rear-view mirrors.

The company is using technology developed by UniSA’s Plastic Mirror Project, a joint project between the Masion Institute and the Australian Research Institute.

Innovation Minister Senator Kim Carr congratulated SMR Automotive Australia on the grant and said the company would be working with UniSA to develop the mirrors.

“The company estimates that if the pilot project leads to full production, its mirrors would lead to more fuel efficient vehicles, saving about 400,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions over five years,” Senator Carr said.

“With many costs of employment such as memberships of professional associations being quite expensive and rising with inflation, the standard claim will leave many people worse off.”

“With a clear and reasonable explanation as to why the expense was relevant to your income producing activities coupled with a receipt as proof, you should have no fear of the taxman.”

Further information concerning what items can be claimed as work related expenses and the cost of managing tax affairs can be found at the Australian Taxation Office website www.ato.gov.au.

Please note that this article is only a guide in nature and should not be taken as specific advice.

Unisa Melbourne

LIVE, WORK, THINK GROW - A new urban campus

A taxing issue

Does tax time confuse you? If the answer is ‘yes’, you’re not alone. With the introduction of a standard deduction in this year’s federal budget, many people are more confused than ever before.

Tax expert Rob Whait, a lecturer for the School of Commerce at UniSA, offers some simple advice to make tax time a little easier.

If you are tired of the usual tax time stress and hassle, there was potentially good news in the recent Federal Budget. From July 1, 2012 the Government will allow individual taxpayers to claim an optional standard deduction for work related expenses and the cost of managing tax affairs. This standard deduction will be $500 from July 1, 2012 and $1000 from July 1, 2013.

If you hand not to have many work related expenses and the cost of managing your tax affairs is low, then this standard claim may be for you. With the Government’s announcement, these types of expenses are now incorporated into one single claim of $500 or $1000 without the need for any proof.

However it appears that for non-work related expenses, such as deductible donations, you still need to claim these at the appropriate place in your income tax return in addition to the standard claim and keep appropriate proof of your claim.

While this standard deduction option from the Government looks appealing, it may not be for everyone. You should consider your own tax situation to ensure that you are getting the full amount of tax deductions to which you are entitled. Not only does your taxable income determine the income tax you pay, but it also determines the Medicare Levy you pay and it may also determine whether you are eligible for any tax rebates and, if so, how much of a rebate you receive.

With many costs of employment such as memberships of professional associations being quite expensive and rising with inflation, the standard claim will leave many people worse off. Furthermore, while the standard claim may appear to be generous now, it is unlikely that the amount will be indexed with inflation, thus with rising costs most peoples’ actual expenditure will likely exceed the standard claim in the not too distant future.

If you wish to continue claiming expenses as you have done previously the Government has said that key who work to support themselves or who want to claim that you must always claim only costs that are spent while performing your income earning activities and also be aware that some items, such as equipment, may need to be deprecitated.

Be prepared to show how the expense was relevant to the production of your employment income. Also, since most tax disputes arise due to disagreement about the facts, it is vital that you keep all receipts and other necessary documents to prove your claim.

With a clear and reasonable explanation as to why the expense was relevant to your income producing activities coupled with a receipt as proof, you should have no fear of the taxman.

Rob Whait, Tax expert.
Two faces of food: Is one pyramid enough?

Good nutrition helps kids grow up healthy. But is it enough to teach children about ‘good’ and ‘bad’ food? Cultural anthropologist Dr Kirrilly Thompson from the Human Factors Group within the Centre for Sleep Research, looks at children’s food choices and why it’s not always as simple as good and bad.

We are all aware of different types of food – junk, fast, healthy, good, bad, sometimes and comfort food. These are the categories we use when we talk to children about food and teach them about healthy eating habits. They make sense to us, and they seem to make sense to children.

But to what extent is children’s knowledge about food intrinsic?

Can they judge food that hasn’t already been introduced to them?

Beyond our myriad of categories for food there lie two fundamental faces of food – the raw ingredient and the mixed meal.

Ingredients are most easy to classify – sugar is bad, vegetables are good. Ingredients are the kinds of things you are most likely to find on the food pyramids plastered on school walls. If you can see the ingredient on the poster, it is probably good for you – grains, vegetables, fruits, milk, meat and beans. Chocolate might be the icing on the cake, the crowning glory on some depictions of the pyramid, together with sweets, fats and oils as the ‘sometimes’ foods.

It doesn’t get much easier than that.

Or does it? Think about the food in your children’s lunchboxes and the school canteen or on supermarket shelves and advertised on television. How many of those can be immediately identified in the food pyramid? Not many. Yet these are the kinds of foods that children are faced with on a daily basis. They are comprised of combinations and transformations of ingredients on the food pyramid with ingredients that are not even on it.

In those instances, children are faced with an early test of critical thinking. They have to imagine the ingredients comprising a meal, evaluate those ingredients, and then weigh up the likely co-presence of good and bad.

Dr Sarah Blunden (also from the Centre for Sleep Research) and I conducted focus groups with 27 children aged five to nine years in South Australian primary schools last year. We asked them at a group level to draw pictures of foods into piles of ‘good or bad for you’. If the group could not agree, the picture was attributed to an ‘I don’t know pile’. This pile grew tall with some of the same usual suspects that we introduce to children as ‘bad’ or ‘sometimes’ food.

Why? Because children were unable to weigh the co-presence of good and bad food ingredients in meals or mixed foods.

Take the meat pie or the hamburger. Meat is good, tomatoes are good, but tomato sauce is bad. Drinks are no easier. How do you evaluate orange juice which comprises good fruit with bad sugar? It seems that confusion arises where children have not been equipped with the ability to compare and to apply their knowledge to new experiences.

In teaching children (and adults) about healthy food habits, we need to be aware of the two faces of food – ingredient and meal.

The food-pyramid is perhaps more precisely a food ingredient pyramid. The meal-pyramid is too infinite to depict visually, but it can be mapped cognitively if we give children the critical evaluation skills they need to weigh up the co-presence of good and bad.

Dr Neil Ralph will join UniSA in September as the Pro Vice Chancellor and Vice President: International and Development. He comes to UniSA from the Queen Mary, University of London where he has been the Director: Corporate Affairs. He will be responsible for the University’s international and marketing strategies, external relations and the University’s branding.

A professor who is recognised internationally for his architecture and sustainable urban design work has joined UniSA’s School of Art, Architecture and Design. Dr Steffen Lehmann will take up the position of Professor of Sustainable Design and Behaviour, as well as being the Director of the new Waste SA Research Centre for Sustainable Design and Behaviour. He joins UniSA from the University of Newcastle where he was the Chair and Professor of Architectural Design. There will be two new senior staff starting with UniSA’s Australian Centre for Child Protection in August: Professor Marianne Berry has been appointed as the Director of the Centre, coming from the University of Kansas where she is the Professor of the School of Social Welfare. She is highly regarded in her field internationally, continuing to be a very active researcher and publisher. She has a lot of international experience on a number of international studies in child welfare and has taken a leadership role with several global groups.

UNISA Magazine
Jo Sharp is Development Officer (Corporate and Named Scholarships) in the Marketing and Development Unit

Our People In Focus: Jo Sharp

Jo Sharp, Development Officer (Corporate and Named Scholarships) with UniSA’s Marketing and Development Unit, manages 100 corporate and privately funded scholarships, grants and prizes on behalf of the UniSA Foundation Committee and the Development Office. The goal of her work is reached in May each year at the annual scholarships and grants ceremony. This year, 119 recipients received scholarships and grants worth almost $490,000.

How long have you worked here and what keeps you in the job?
In 2004 I joined UniSA as the Development Officer (Bequests and Fundraising) and was later employed as a Scholarships Project Officer to coordinate the planning, development and implementation of the university-wide Scholarships Management System. With the expansion of the Development Office and the team securing more scholarships, the Project Officer role has evolved into my current position.

I really enjoy my role because it’s diverse, challenging and rewarding. Every day is different. Having worked at UniSA for many years, I really enjoy the corporate culture, seeing students achieve their dreams through scholarships, the professional development opportunities and most importantly, working with a great team of people.

What do you like most about your job?
My role is essentially about providing opportunities for students and easing the financial burden of study. It’s wonderful to be able to pick up the phone and tell a student that they’ve just been awarded a scholarship. Some scream with delight and others are just in shock. A highlight is witnessing first hand at the annual scholarships and grants ceremony. This year, 119 recipients received scholarships and grants worth almost $490,000.

What or who inspires you?
People who have overcome adversity to achieve their dreams are inspiring. In my job, I have met some amazing scholarship recipients who have come from financially or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. So often I think they’d have the opportunity to go to university but have the determination to succeed and achieve their academic goals. They inspire me. One scholar in particular came to Australia as a refugee with a young family. On the basis of financial disadvantage, he received a scholarship to support his social work and international studies and he is doing very well.

Beyond work, what are your interests?
Travel is my number one passion and I love exploring new places and cultures and meeting new people. I’ve been lucky enough to travel to Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, the United Kingdom and Europe and I hope to visit the United States and Canada next year. I’ve also travelled around Australia and spent a year living on the Gold Coast in Queensland enjoying the beautiful weather and the relaxed lifestyle.

Where did you grow up?
I was born and bred in Port Augusta (300km north of Adelaide). At 21, I decided that I wanted to explore the world so I moved to Adelaide for a couple of years before embarking on an overseas working holiday. I still have family and friends living in Port Augusta and I enjoy going home to visit.

Favourite place that you have lived?
After spending a few months backpacking through Europe, I lived and worked in London which was a fantastic experience and I met some great people who remain friends. The city is vibrant and culturally diverse and there is always something to do and see although, I didn’t love the weather, especially in winter.

What are you looking forward to in the next year?
After six years of working and studying part-time on the weekends, I recently completed my communications and media management degree so I am looking forward to having more time this year to spend with friends and family, travelling interstate and overseas and renovating my home. I plan to do postgraduate study in the future but for now, I just enjoy having lots of free time.

What are you reading right now?
I was given Richard Branson’s autobiography as a gift so I’ve just started reading it.

What’s the best piece of advice you’ve ever received?
My mother’s favourite aphorism is “treat others as you would like to be treated”.

ACHIEVEMENTS
Virtual worlds award

A project that aims to improve disabled access to virtual learning environments, has earned UniSA’s Dr Denise Wood the inaugural Telstra-TIA Novell Prize for Telecommunications and Disability.

Jo Wood, Senior Lecturer in the School of Communication, International Studies and Languages, is undertaking the project as part of an Australian Learning and Teaching Council project.

Dr Wood said her project had identified the benefits of Web 2.0 and 3D virtual worlds such as Second Life, for people with disabilities.

“For these benefits to be realised, there is an urgent need for developers to address the identified accessibility challenges posed by such dynamic and media rich environments,” Dr Wood said.

The $20,000 prize is awarded for the best original paper offered for publication by the Telecommunications Journal of Australia that demonstrates the benefits an innovative use of telecommunications technology can deliver in assisting individuals with disabilities.

Learning and teaching prestige

UniSA Associate Professor Betty Leeak is one of three people to receive a coveted 2010 Australian Learning and Teaching Council National Teaching Fellowship.

The $340,000 award will fund an ongoing program of research and activities into the internationalisation of curriculum.

“It is easy to talk about internationalisation, but when you look below the surface of the rhetoric, it’s clear that we need to know much more about what internationalisation means to academic staff in different disciplines so that we can effectively measure our success in this area,” Associate Prof Leeak said.

She said the activities would be supported by national and international networks to strengthen and broaden case studies and ensure that the framework was widely and critically evaluated prior to its release.

LIVE WORK THINK GROW
How Brands Grow… what marketers don’t know
By Byron Sharp
RPP: $39.95. Published by Oxford University Press, 2009

Director of the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute for Marketing Science at UniSA, Professor Byron Sharp, shares years of research about brands and marketing in his new book.

Hailed as a myth-busting book, How Brands Grow… what marketers don’t know, is based on extensive data that has uncovered scientific laws about buying and brand performance. The Nielsen Company and TNS were among those who provided access to vast amounts of data that covers hundreds of product categories and a number of countries.

Prof Sharp said marketing, advertising, sales and market research professionals will benefit from reading the book.

“The main message in the book is that there are scientific laws (empirical regularities) of buying behavior that reveal how marketing works,” Prof Sharp said.

Behind that Shiny Resume – Jottings of a Troubled College Student
By Jasmine Yow

As a Singapore high school student, Jasmine Yow excelled at her studies but hit a big hurdle when she was diagnosed with bipolar depression in 2007.

Seventeen-years-old at the time, she says she stopped functioning at school and released a lot of her pent up frustration on paper. After dealing with the illness, she looked back at the material and wanted to share her story.

“I decided it was a story I needed to tell in a society that still views mental health as a taboo subject,” Yow said. “Many people need to know that it’s okay to have depression or mental illness and that it’s perfectly ok to seek professional help.

“Most of all, I wanted to reach struggling students and tell them there is hope for change.”

Behind that Shiny Resume shows Yow’s honest struggles, and follows her battle to reconcile her fiery passion to be outstanding in life, with her desire for peer acceptance.

Yow moved to Adelaide earlier this year to pursue her passion for writing by undertaking a UniSA journalism degree.

Wheels on the Bus
Illustrated by Mandy Foot

Animal lover and UniSA graduate from a Bachelor of Design specialising in Illustration (1992), Mandy Foot, has released her fourth children’s picture book. The Wheels on the Bus explores a cheeky wombat bus driver that drives his animal passengers around Australia, including a snorkelling emu and surf-surfing koala.

Foot says the most enjoyable part of illustrating children’s books is the initial brainstorming process.

“Coming up with the ideas for each spread and developing the characters and expressions is quite exciting,” she says. “There are quite often characters that don’t make it to the final cut but we think would make an excellent book by themselves – the brain never stops during this process.

“And as much as I curse myself when I come to painting the final pieces, I love adding those extra details like a bug or some other character that the kids can look for on each page - they love trying to find these things!”

Time to Listen – How it feels to be young and dying
Written by Amber Turk and edited by Margaret Brown
RPP: $22.95. Published by Wakefield Press, 2010

Amber Turk lived with an inoperable brain tumour for 12 months before dying in November 2003 at the age of 27. During her final year she wrote a journal documenting her emotional journey.

The journal was originally intended to give medical staff an insight into the emotions that patients are going through. Time to Listen – how it feels to be young and dying, is an edited version of her journal, and an interview Amber did with Dr Michael Ashby, just a few months before her death plus interviews with her mum.

UniSA Research Fellow with the Hawke Research Institute, Margaret Brown, has edited the material into this 99-page book that gives readers a unique window into the private world of a dying person.

“This book is thought provoking and essential reading for anyone who cares for others who are dying,” Brown said. “Amber was an ordinary person who was able to articulate the ultimate human suffering, facing her death as a young woman.

“Meeting Amber’s mother and getting to know Amber through her writing was a wonderful experience. It was often hard to persist as my tears continued over the many years I worked on the book.

“At altogether it was one of the most deeply moving and rewarding experiences of my life as a social scientist. It has been a privilege to work on this book.

“I still find Amber’s words inspirational. She has presented us with a gift, an insight into death, and our challenge is to hear her words.”
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