National Symposium on Racism

Anti-racism summit offers urgent solutions to Australia’s racial issues — page 6
Seated with Prime Minister Kevin Rudd during the Indonesian President’s visit to Australia in March, Murdoch’s Professor David Hill raised the importance of encouraging Australian students to study in Indonesia.

“Quite unexpectedly I was given the honour of being seated at the main table with the Prime Minister and Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, together with their wives, the two Foreign Ministers, the respective Ambassadors and several leading business people,” said Professor Hill, Chair of Murdoch’s South-East Asian Studies.

“I used the opportunity to mention over lunch the importance and strength of the bilateral educational relationship.

“In particular I was pleased to be able to raise the importance of both governments encouraging Australian students to study in Indonesia to balance the much larger numbers of Indonesians studying in Australia.”

Professor Hill said he was pleased to have the opportunity to bring the work that the Australian Consortium for In-Country Indonesian Studies (ACICIS) is doing to the attention of the nations’ leaders.

He added that there was a need for better educating the Australian community with regard to the tremendous changes in Indonesian society and the political system there over the past decade.

“There is also a need to correct the many negative stereotypes in Australian perceptions of Indonesia,” Professor Hill said.

Braving the shave for charity

Four Murdoch staff members were part of the Short and Sweet team that either shaved or dyed their hair to raise over $10,000 for the Leukaemia Foundation’s World’s Greatest Shave.

Faculty Support Coordinator, Annette Connolly enlisted the help of Faculty Dean Arts and Education, Professor Andrew Taggart, Faculty Dean Creative Technology and Media, Jeremy Bean and Human Resources Consultant, Mitchell Carre.

“Karine from the on-campus hair salon Hairess did the honours, shaving the guys’ heads in Bush Court while the rest of the ladies on the team either shaved or dyed our hair at the Cockburn Gateway Shopping Centre,” Ms Connolly said.

“Our initial team was just two people with a target of $1000, as our team grew, so did our target, going to $5000.

“I’d like to thank everyone that has contributed so far, helping us to beat our target and raise $10,532.”

World’s Greatest Shave funds free services to support patients and families living with leukaemias, lymphomas, myeloma and related blood disorders. It also funds blood cancer research to find better treatments and cures.

Donations are still welcome until May 31. Visit www.worldsgreatestshave.com, enter the team name Short and Sweet and make your donation.

Through the generosity of donors, the Australian Consortium for In-Country Indonesian Studies (ACICIS) is able to offer seed funding to students. The funding is provided to eligible students to assist with costs associated with travel to and within Indonesia.

ACICIS provides opportunities for Australian students to study in Indonesia to promote the development of a shared understanding of the social, economic and political issues affecting the Region.

The ACICIS Fund supports students from around Australia to study in Indonesia and to undertake research in the region. This fund is generously supported by the Australia Awards and the Australian Government.”

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In a world first, researchers have sequenced the entire genetic code of a human who has been dead for thousands of years.

“Taking all the fragmented DNA and pasting it together is kind of like doing a billion piece jigsaw – but the results are well worth the effort,” said Dr Mike Bunce, Murdoch University’s ancient DNA expert.

The international research team, led by Professor Eske Willerslev at the University of Copenhagen, isolated the DNA from a 4000 year old clump of male hair found during an archaeological excavation in Greenland.

The team spent the best part of a year isolating the DNA and assembling the DNA blue-print known as a genome.

“New DNA technology has allowed us to sequence DNA and analyse the genes from this now extinct human lineage,” said Dr Mike Bunce, also one of the authors on the paper.

Analysis of the genes of the prehistoric Greenlander, identified as being from the Saqqaq people, have provided new insights into how the Eskimo looked – including his tendency to baldness, brown eyes, dark skin, shovel-shaped front teeth and dry earwax.

“This research heralds a new era of archaeology and shows how small fragments of hair and bone stored in museum collections can provide exciting new ways of studying human history,” Dr Bunce said.
New fish species discovered

**MURDOCH UNIVERSITY’S FISH SCIENTISTS HAVE DISCOVERED A NEW SPECIES OF PYGMY PERCH IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.**

Drs David Morgan and Stephen Beatty, of Murdoch’s Centre for Fish and Fisheries Research, said the discovery of a new species of freshwater fish was the first find of its kind in Western Australia’s south in over 40 years.

“The discovery was part of a larger project that is funded by the Water Corporation,” Dr Morgan said.

“This is the first such find in south-western Australia in over 40 years, since the enigmatic Salamanderfish was discovered.

“We noticed the differences immediately and have since found many more and believe that it has gone unnoticed for so many years because of its very restricted distribution.”

The discovery was confirmed in collaboration with geneticists in South Australia, Dr Mark Adams (South Australian Museum) and Dr Michael Hammer (Native Fish Australia).

“In collaboration with Dr Adams and Dr Hammer in SA, we have demonstrated genetic differences and that morphologically they are unique.”

This takes the total number of pygmy perch species to three in WA, out of seven Australia-wide.

Over the next few months the scientists will continue to examine the species in order to name it.

Funding for new Centre of Excellence for Pain Research

**MURDOCH PSYCHOLOGY LECTURER PROFESSOR PETER DRUMMOND AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR DR PHIL FINCH ARE ESTABLISHING A CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR PAIN RESEARCH.**

Professor Drummond said chronic pain is a huge problem in Australia affecting one in every five adults and is estimated to cost the economy $34 billion per year.

“Our aim is to gain new insights into the mechanisms that underlie pain and other chronic inflammatory conditions to establish a foundation for new approaches to treatment,” Professor Drummond said.

“We have already made significant progress in identifying mechanisms that may lie at the heart of neuropathic (nerve injury) pain.”

The recent addition of Dr Philip Stumbles and Dr Julia Inglis (from Murdoch’s School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences) will enable the research team to investigate the mechanisms of disease and trial new treatments in animal models.

“By combining expertise from psychology, medicine and biomedical sciences, we will be able to make significantly more progress,” Professor Drummond said.

The Centre was recently successful in applying for a grant from medical technology company St Judes Medical.

“The $15,000 grant from St Judes Medical will help us to establish a research centre to find solutions for chronic pain and inflammatory diseases,” Professor Drummond said.

Those who would like to support the research program or find out more about pain research at Murdoch University can contact Professor Peter Drummond by email on P.Drummond@murdoch.edu.au or telephone 9360 2415.
Witness produces powerful theatre

Two men, one white and the other black, find themselves translating for the other in court, each forced to enter the other's traumatic space and navigate the treacherous journey between reconciliation and damnation.

This is the scenario explored in Witness, a play directed by Murdoch's Dr Serge Tampalini and starring Murdoch academics Associate Professor Martin Mhando and Dr David Moody.

Witness explores an encounter from the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission where a white interpreter must record and tell the story of a black activist and victim of torture.

"The play is being written as a devised project – it is being developed through improvisations thus giving the writers (who are also the actors) empathetic understanding of the processes of witnessing and interpretation," Professor Mhando said.

"The story will be developed through creating skits and discussing their meaning and performance within an improvised structure."

Despite its confronting themes, Witness is also a humorous and moving piece of theatre that resonates across borders and cultures and speaks to an important phenomenon of our time; reparation and reconciliation after violence.

"I believe the play is timely – and timeless – given that traumatic social experiences have coloured, and will continue to colour, global social relations," he said.

He said the many truth and reconciliation tribunals in such countries as Cambodia, Rwanda, Kenya and Kosovo revealed a need for driving the agenda for restorative justice in society.

The three Murdoch academics have formed a production company Ujamaa (the Swahili word for "brotherhood") to bring Witness to the Blue Room and to collaborate on future works.

All have extensive experience as performers and writers: School of Media and Communication's Associate Professor Mhando is an award-winning film director in both feature and documentary films, School of Social Sciences and Humanities' Dr Moody is an experienced actor, director and writer, who has worked in theatre for more than 30 years and Dr Tampalini is currently the Chair of English and Creative Arts and has many years experience as a director and designer.

Witness is on from May 5 – May 22 at the Blue Room, 53 James Street.

Staff and student films are gaining recognition

Short films made by a Murdoch lecturer and two former students have been recognised at international film events and the WA Film Awards.

This is Perth, a satirical film by former Murdoch Communications and Media Studies students Vincenzo Perrella and Dan Osborn, who graduated in 2004 and 2003 respectively, became a YouTube hit last year.

Those viewing the three-minute film could be mistaken for believing city dwellers offered up gifts to a giant squid affectionately nicknamed Old Bertie, the Bell tower was parliament house and the Wheel of Perth was in fact a revolving correctional facility.

This is Perth recently won the top prize for Best Film at the WA Screen Awards, held in March, as well as the People’s Choice award, which is decided by popular vote at WA Screen Awards screenings in February.

Brad Major, also a former Communications and Media Studies student, produced Ronan’s Escape about a 14-year-old boy living in a small wheatbelt town who had been bullied his whole life at school.

Told with very little dialogue, the almost 16-minute film written and directed by AJ Carter, picked up the highest award at the prestigious 2010 Sedona International Film Festival in the USA, taking out the Best Short Film (Director’s Choice) award.

In addition to these wins, Murdoch’s associate lecturer in screen production and PhD candidate, Colette McKenna, has made the second round of an international film competition with her film The Swimmer.

The Swimmer is one of 21 films to have made the second round of The Doorpost Film Project’s 2010 short film festival.

Filmed on location at Santa Maria College in Attadale, The Swimmer depicts the plight of a young girl who suffered burns to her body after being caught in the crossfire of conflict in Belfast.

You can watch Ms McKenna’s film by visiting the Doorpost Film Project website www.thedoportalpost.com and searching for The Swimmer.

Shot in arm for swine dysentery

Promising advances in combating Swine Dysentery have paid off for Murdoch University researchers, receiving major backing to pursue the development and commercialisation of a vaccine.

Spirogene Pty Ltd, a Murdoch University-based biotechnology company, has announced a newly established collaboration and licensing agreement with one of the major animal health vaccine companies to develop and commercialise a vaccine for swine dysentery.

"Swine dysentery is a major global problem, costing the pig industry around $1 billion annually," said Professor David Hampson, Professor of Veterinary Microbiology at Murdoch University.

"It is a disease that no producer can afford to live with.

"The high cost of disease to the pig industry is associated with depression of growth and feed conversion efficiency, the costs of continual in-feed medication and death in severe cases," he said.

Chief Executive Officer of Spirogene, Dr Alistair Murdoch, said the agreement built on the research strengths of Professor Hampson, initially in collaboration with Professor Matthew Bellgard, Director of the Centre for Comparative Genomics, and his key researchers, Dr Tom La and Dr Nyree Phillips.

"Professor Hampson has been a world authority in this field for nearly 20 years and has been actively searching for a vaccine solution to the swine dysentery problem since 2003," Dr Murdoch said.
Anti-racism activists and experts from around the world converged on Murdoch University’s South Street campus in mid-March to reveal the latest in the fight against racism and offer urgent solutions.

Held on March 19-20, the National Symposium on Racism, Racism Revisited: Anti-racism Leadership and Practice heard from many well-renowned speakers including President Obama's adviser Professor Sylvester Gates, UK anti-racism activist Viv Ahmun and AFL CEO Andrew Demetriou.

The event was run by Murdoch in partnership with the Ethnic Communities Council of WA, Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australia and Federation of African Communities' Council.

Other speakers included Daisy Tjapamurra Ward, Refugee Council of Australia CEO Paul Power, Muslim author Hanifa Deen, WA Equal Opportunity Commissioner Yvonne Henderson and Australia's Race Discrimination Commissioner Graeme Innes.

Murdoch's Vice Chancellor Professor John Yovich said the symposium raised awareness of racism attitudes in Australia and highlighted their negative impact.

"Murdoch and its event partners are committed to creating a racism-free multicultural Australia and finding preventative strategies that work," Professor Yovich said.

“This crucial national summit addressed one of the toughest issues we face this century – universal access to social justice – and recognised the valuable contributions other cultures are making to Australian and international societies.”

Professor Yovich said anti-racism is a significant core value at Murdoch, one of the most inclusive and diverse universities in the country.

AFL reflects and promotes multiculturalism

AFL Chief Executive Officer Andrew Demetriou outlined the contributions Australian football has continued to make to anti-racism and multiculturalism in Australia.

Mr Demetriou, also Chair of Australia's Multicultural Advisory Council, said it was no longer considered okay by Australian football supporters for spectators to make fun of or vitil players based on their race.

He said the AFL had been fundamentally changed by several racist events in recent years which had forced the organisation to back up its words with actions to overcome racism in the sport and engage with different cultures. "Our game is acting as a social leveller and reflecting Australia’s ever-evolving cultural diversity," Mr Demetriou said.

"I think of Australian football as the great democratiser: it’s a game for anyone and everyone, it’s a game which is inclusive, accessible and affordable; it’s a game that does not discriminate, it’s a game that brings people together, it’s also a game that doesn’t turn its back on people.”

He said that while there were still pockets of intolerance and work to do against racism, AFL's greatest power was its ability to bring people from different backgrounds together and be a force for understanding of multiculturalism and unity.

Mr Demetriou said it was important that the AFL reflected the whole of our society and not just part of it and in the main he believed that it now did.

He used examples such as the current cultural mix of players nationally and the fact that a rookie Sudanese player was destined to become the first Sudanese AFL player.

He detailed how the AFL was increasingly taking footy into multicultural diverse, low socio-economic and Indigenous communities and even overseas to engage with different cultures.

Refugee Council of Australia CEO Paul Power speaking at the National Symposium on Racism.
Governor General Her Excellency Quentin Bryce launched the African Women’s Council of Australia at the National Symposium on Racism at Murdoch University.

She said she was grateful that such leadership as that being shown by the African women in Australia had found its way to this country’s shores and communities.

Speaking at the National Symposium on Racism at Murdoch University, Ms Henderson said that while the US had the reputation of imprisoning the highest percentage of its citizens, WA’s rate of imprisoning one in 15 Aboriginal men and one in 160 Aboriginal women each year is higher than rates of black men and women jailed in the US, according to WA’s Equal Opportunity Commissioner Yvonne Henderson.

She said that today we faced a much more insidious form of racism than in previous generations with systemic, institutionalised racism embedded in the way organisations such as government departments operated while the people who worked there were largely unaware.

Ms Henderson said that her department continued to work extensively across government departments in WA including housing, police and health to improve outcomes for minority cultures and especially Aboriginals.

They had also made progress with the way police investigated cases such as Aboriginal women who were the victims of domestic violence.

The new Council.

She used the evocative quote “women hold up half the sky” to illustrate the importance of African women’s voices.

Recounting a cultural exchange last year with the first female Prime Minister of Mozambique, the Governor General said she had arrived in Africa knowing that the face of poverty was a woman, but left knowing that the face of its future leadership was also a woman.

Ms Bryce was presented with a traditional African garment from African Women’s Council President Dr Casta Tungarara.

Dr Tungarara said it was vital for grassroots African women’s voices to be heard in order to find and offer solutions to build self-esteem and fight discrimination, stop domestic violence and other forms of abuse going on in the African community and address the growing numbers of young African mothers.

The Council would be a platform to discuss these issues and develop strategies to overcome threats to social cohesion and benefit African families at a time when there are growing concerns over numbers of African children being taken into care in WA.

It would also play a unique role in advising government on a wide range of such issues.

The African community had a strong role to play in building a strong Australia, Ms Bryce added.

Call for broader alliances to break down Muslim stereotypes

While Muslims in Australia continue to live in the shadow of hostility, award-winning Muslim author Hanifa Deen says she is concerned that victimology is creeping into the debate among some Muslim communities.

“It’s dangerous when you concentrate on circling the wagons in the defence of Islam although this is understandable given the increase in anti-Muslim feelings in Australia,” Ms Deen said in the lead-up to her talk at the National Symposium on Racism at Murdoch University.

“I’m a great believer in alliances and coalitions – we need to build bridges between secular and religious groups, and break down barriers so we are able to agree and disagree on things together.”

Ms Deen is a former Deputy Commissioner of Multicultural Affairs in Western Australia, and former Hearing Commissioner with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission of Australia.

She said there were a lot of Muslim community activities in the interfaith arena, but much wider engagement was needed to break down stereotypes that the media and Australians had of Muslim people.

“We also have to look back to the 80s when there were so many reports and research done and effective strategies created in social justice and anti-racism – we don’t have to reinvent everything with each successive government.”

Ms Deen used the introduction of the Racial Discrimination Act in Western Australia during the Jack van Tongerent years as an example of looking back at what worked in the past.

She said the introduction of such legislation was supported by the majority of both ethnic and Anglo communities who were angry and saw it as an insult to civic pride that Perth was picking up a reputation as a racist state at that time.
In March, Shadow Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Sophie Mirabella flew in from Canberra to tour the Murdoch-based WA State Agricultural Biotechnology Centre (SABC) and to discuss capacity building.

Met by five of Murdoch’s leaders in science research and development, Mrs Mirabella was briefed on SABC, the State’s major agricultural centre, before discussing capacity building and access to Federal Government funds at Murdoch University and in WA.

“Murdoch University is poised to be at the centre of the State’s research and development powerhouse in training and education for agriculture,” said Professor Jim Reynoldson, Murdoch’s Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research).

“Murdoch University is poised to be at the centre of the State’s research and development powerhouse in training and education for agriculture,” said Professor Jim Reynoldson, Murdoch’s Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research).

“The relocation of the Department of Agriculture and Food (WA) staff to Murdoch’s campus is highly significant.”

Mrs Mirabella said the key for success was greater engagement with Canberra in building science and innovation capacity in WA.

As well as Professor Reynoldson, Mrs Mirabella met with Associate Professor Mehmet Cakir (who invited Mrs Mirabella to the campus during the ‘Science meets Parliament’ forum), Professor of Agricultural Biotechnology Michael Jones, Faculty of Sustainability, Environment and Life Sciences Dean Professor Stuart Bradley and the Crop and Plant Research Institute Director Professor John Howieson.

She also heard from Professor Howieson on the research capacity of Murdoch in agricultural biotechnology, genomics and bioinformatics and took the opportunity to further discuss with Associate Professor Cakir his gene discovery project that aims to safeguard Australia from insect pests, following their meeting at the ‘Science meets Parliament’ forum.

Engage with Canberra to ensure future of science, says Shadow Minister

Grandmother graduates

Judith Crossland is proof it is never too late to go to university.

The mother of six, grandmother to 21 and great-grandmother of one, has graduated from Murdoch University with a Bachelor of History at the age of 81.

It is Mrs Crossland’s first tertiary qualification. Born in 1928, she left school at age 16 – her mother, a widow, had sent Mrs Crossland to a private school in Perth for two years after which she went back to the family farm at Corrigin.

“I had two years at high school which was considered quite a good education for a young lady of the 1940s,” Mrs Crossland said.

At age 21, she married Len Crossland, who she had grown up with, and raised six children, now aged between 41 and 59.

“His dad and my dad went to school together and his father was the first farmer to settle in Corrigin,” she said.

In the 70s, the family moved to Perth and Mrs Crossland went to work as a medical secretary, eventually setting up a business where she taught medical terminology to secretaries for 25 years before retiring at the age of 79.

Mrs Crossland’s retirement lasted just six months before boredom got the better of her.

“After six months I had had enough, so with persuasion from friends, I did a mature age entrance test.”

Her love of history developed as a child.

“As soon as I could read or almost as soon as I could read, I read history – I had no desire to read fiction because it wasn’t true,” she said with a laugh.

She enrolled at Murdoch in 2007 and said she was immediately accepted by staff and students.

“I love Murdoch,” she said.

“They accepted me; the staff are so caring and so helpful and the students were genuinely accepting of me, of which I am very grateful.”

Mrs Crossland, whose grandfather was the former Governor and Premier Sir James Mitchell, said she also developed an appreciation for the period she grew up in.

“I lived through that era, I was a teenager during the war and remembering those times, you can put everything in perspective,” she said.

“I look back at it now and we really did have to economise but I look back at those years with great pleasure.”

Mrs Crossland has no plans to slowdown and intends to do her Honours on Sir James Mitchell.

“You see your grandfather a lot differently when you are 81 or 82 than when you are eight,” she said.
Murdoch University has honoured two leading academics and a businessman with honorary doctorates at its first graduation ceremonies of the year.

At the March 3 graduation ceremony at the Perth Exhibition and Convention Centre, well-regarded and accomplished expert and author in East Asian affairs, Dr Kenneth Chern was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Letters.

Dr Chern is the United States Consul General in Perth and has had a distinguished career in diplomacy.

Before his posting to Perth in 2007, Dr Chern was the Deputy Consul General in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and he has also been posted to Beijing, Taipei, Hong Kong, Manila, and Cebu.

Nationally respected businessman Richard Lester was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of the University at the March 10 ceremony.

Mr Lester is the founder and Executive Chairman and CEO of the Lester Group, a private group of property development companies formed in 1995, which has interests in the Perth metropolitan area and in the South-West of Western Australia.

At the March 18 graduation ceremony, Professor Barry McGaw, one of Australia’s leading educators with a career spanning more than 40 years, was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Education.

Professor McGaw is the man who will oversee the development of a world-class curriculum for all Australian students from Kindergarten to Year 12, starting with the key learning areas of English, mathematics, the sciences and history.

From 1976 to 1984, Professor McGaw was Professor of Education at Murdoch, which also included a period of time as Dean of Education.

Murdoch’s Vice Chancellor Professor John Yovich said all three had made enormous contributions to their field and left a lasting legacy for others to be inspired and to learn.

“Murdoch University is honoured to recognise the work of Dr Chern, Mr Lester and Professor McGaw,” Professor Yovich said.

“Their achievements are significant and each recipient continues to make a strong contribution in their chosen field.”

Murdoch University prides itself on attracting free thinkers wanting to make a difference.

This ethos was perfectly reflected in each of the three valedictory addresses at the Murdoch graduations held at the Perth Exhibition and Convention Centre in March.

All three of this year’s Valedictorians entered Murdoch as either mature-aged students or via alternative pathways.

Tracey Woolrych gave the valedictory address at the first graduation ceremony on March 3, and was also awarded a University medal for outstanding academic performance.

At the age of 40, Ms Woolrych reassessed her life after the death of a close friend and decided to go to university to study psychology, a subject she has always been interested in.

Before enrolling in Murdoch’s Bachelor of Psychology in 2006, Ms Woolrych had worked as a bookkeeper – she ran her own performance business – acting, singing and puppeteering – while she was studying.

The mother of one credits her academic success to excellent organisation skills and finding the ‘thing’ she was good at.

“I think the open door policy at Murdoch, the acceptance and diversity of students gave me permission to be ‘Tracey the successful student’ and that was really important,” Ms Woolrych said.

Ms Woolrych also completed a Postgraduate Certificate in Business Administration in 2007.

She is now doing her PhD at Murdoch University.

Bachelor of Engineering graduate Alan Punch, who gave the valedictory speech at the March 10 graduation ceremony, and who was also awarded a University medal for outstanding academic performance, returned to study at the age of 25.

Initially he had completed an electrical apprenticeship after leaving high school and spent many years working on remote West Australian mine sites on a fly-in, fly-out basis.

Mr Punch juggled the tough academic workload by working as an electrician on mine sites during semester breaks.

He said he hoped to be a positive role model for students who did not do well at high school saying if you manage to find something you are passionate about, success won’t be too far away.

Mr Punch is now working as an engineer at Woodside.

Braden Hill, a Bachelor of Education (Secondary) and Bachelor of Arts graduate, gave the valedictory address at the March 18 graduation ceremony.

Mr Hill said he has always wanted to work in the field of education, because, as an Indigenous person, he believes there are tangible ways to go about improving the educational outcomes of Indigenous students while overcoming the tacit acceptance of Aboriginal underachievement in Australian schools.

After graduating from Lakeland Senior High School, Mr Hill completed the Kulbardi Aboriginal Centre.

Valedictorian Braden Hill wants to improve the educational outcomes of Indigenous students.

Aboriginal Tertiary Entrance Course (KATEC) Diploma in University Studies, a yearlong bridging course run by Murdoch’s Kulbardi Aboriginal Centre.

Mr Hill has now come full circle and is teaching fulltime at Kulbardi in its KATEC course.

He plans to undertake his Honours at Murdoch later in the year.
Preparing students

This year, Murdoch has launched seven new foundation units to prepare incoming students for their studies at the University.

The units are compulsory for all first year students and have been a feature of the University’s curriculum since foundation.

Convenor of Foundation Units, Associate Professor Lorraine Marshall, said the units have been updated to reflect issues relevant to today’s society and new educational practises.

“The new units are: Australia in Asia; Creativity and Innovation; Food for Thought; Knowing Nature; Next Life; Today, Yesterday, Tomorrow; and Wellbeing.”

Professor Marshall said that Murdoch is one of only a few universities that has foundation units. These units are interdisciplinary in nature and require students to acquire knowledge of fields of study beyond a single discipline.

“For example Today, Yesterday Tomorrow combines philosophy and science to prepare students to meet today’s challenges and enhance their ability to imagine possible sustainable futures,” Professor Marshall said.

The units provide students with generic learning skills such as writing, critical thinking, reading, life-long learning skills and knowledge of Indigenous cultures.

“Indigenous issues are important to our society and form part of Murdoch’s commitment to social justice, so the topic or theme of each unit is examined from an Indigenous perspective,” Professor Marshall said.

“Murdoch’s Kulbardi Aboriginal Centre played a key role in introducing Indigenous Cultures into the units.”

The foundation units also provide the basis for developing particular graduate attributes in Murdoch students.

“Murdoch has nine graduate attributes that we aim to develop in our students: social justice; interdisciplinarity; global perspective; communication; critical and creative thinking; social interaction; ethics and independent and lifelong learning skills,” Professor Marshall said.

Vaccine leads to sweet smell of boars

Murdoch’s fourth year Animal Science first-class honours student in 2009, Amy Lealiifano, has discovered that ‘boar taint’, an objectionable odour and flavour that sometimes occurs from cooking pork from male pigs, can be controlled using a strategic vaccination schedule.

Supported by the Pork Cooperative Research Centre, Ms Lealiifano’s research found that giving boars a secondary anti-GnRF vaccination two weeks before market effectively controlled ‘boar taint’.

“Traditionally boar taint has been controlled by surgical castration in the first week of life, but surgical castrates tend to be fatter and convert feed less efficiently than entire male pigs,” Ms Lealiifano said.

“This in turn increases cost of production and reduces the overall value of the pig.”

Pigs vaccinated with the anti-GnRF vaccine Improvac, effectively showed control of boar taint while also benefiting from the production advantage of all the performance attributes of an entire male until it received the second vaccination, which is normally recommended at four to five weeks pre-slaughter.

“While it’s still recommended that the second vaccination is given four weeks pre-slaughter, our results mean that if producers find a proportion of pigs have reached the target slaughter weight only two or three weeks after the second vaccination, then they can be safely sold as free of boar taint,” Ms Lealiifano said.

“This, of course, relies on pigs correctly receiving the first and second vaccinations.”

Ms Lealiifano said the experiment also showed that as the time between the second vaccination and slaughter increased so too did the increase in back fat.

“This increase means some producers and processors might question the use of Improvac, regardless of how well it can control boar taint,” she said.

“Showing that boar taint could be controlled without increasing back fat when pigs receive the second vaccination just two weeks pre-slaughter, greatly improves Improvac’s attraction.”

Ms Lealiifano stressed that producers contemplating using Improvac this way should first discuss the strategy with their veterinarian/nutritionist and ensure no pigs are sent to slaughter less than two weeks post-vaccination.

Ms Lealiifano recently presented her Improvac research at the 12th biennial conference of the Australasian Pig Science Association (APSA), Cairns, Queensland, where she received a trophy and $2000 cheque for winning the Pork CRC Award for best presentation at APSA.

Going green, Murdoch staff switch off for Earth Hour

The Office of Finance’s Business support team participated in Earth Hour, even scheduling lunch breaks to turn off computers. Left to right: Serena Zhang, Fiona Feist, Kerry Pinkham and Anka Samiríc.

Staff and students took action on climate change on March 26 when they turned off lights and unnecessary appliances.

Environmental Program Manager, Caroline Minton, said the action was in support of the global Earth Hour event the following day.

“Earth Hour is an important initiative that involves hundreds of millions of people around the world taking action against climate change,” Ms Minton said.

“By doing something as simple as turning off lights and appliances for an hour we can have a positive impact and protect future generations.”

Public security lighting at Murdoch remained on but staff and students were encouraged to turn off other lights and unnecessary appliances, such as printers, microwaves, kettles and urns.

Ms Minton said it was impossible to get exact energy consumption figures for Murdoch’s use during its Earth Hour, but as a guide Murdoch consumes approximately 2000KWh per hour during peak times in summer.

“During the Murdoch University Earth Hour, assuming the entire campus shut down for one hour in this period it would save 1.96 tonnes of CO2 emissions, the equivalent of the amount of power used by a small home over a six month period.”

Ms Minton reminded people who want to cut down on consumption at work or home to turn off appliances at the wall, switch or plug, as appliances on ‘standby’ waste energy.

“Reducing energy use in turn reduces fossil fuel use, carbon footprint, greenhouse gas emissions, and contribution to climate change,” Ms Minton said.
Pesticide test puts high quality grain on export menu

Murdoch University and the CBH Group have teamed up to improve the food safety and export quality of Australian grain with an innovative pesticide test.

The collaborative partners have agreed to jointly deliver testing services for a variety of grains using an innovative platform capable of detecting more than 150 pesticide residues simultaneously.

The mass-spectrometry based test, developed in collaboration with researchers from the Murdoch Separation Sciences and Metabolomics Group, is the culmination of more than two years of research effort.

“Our goal was to develop a test that is rapid, cost-effective and sensitive. The test platform must be able to be fully customised to allow us to respond to the challenges of a changing landscape in agricultural practices and consumer protection,” said Associate Professor Robert Trengove, Director of Separation Sciences and Metabolomics.

Tim Morrison, Director of Research, Innovation and Commercialisation at Murdoch University said the collaboration builds on Murdoch University’s strength in cutting-edge agricultural technologies, leveraging on the CBH Group’s position as one of Australia’s leading agribusinesses.

“We are very excited to partner with the CBH Group in delivering the new gold standard for pesticide residue monitoring,” he said.

Radek Talma, Manager of Laboratory Services for the CBH Group, said this partnership will enable the CBH Group to help protect Australia’s reputation as a supplier of clean and green, high quality, grain.

“A few years ago we recognised an urgent need to develop high throughput, in-house, screening and quantification testing services,” Mr Talma said.

“From this, a strong partnership with Murdoch University was born – a partnership which will allow us to further develop chemical/pesticide residue analysis technology so that we can meet Australian exporters’ existing and future Maximum Residue Level (MRL) requirements.

“The CBH Group is continuously looking at innovative ways to deliver greater value to the grains industry, ensuring that Australian growers remain highly competitive in the international marketplace.”

New look Club Murdoch welcomes back staff

Club Murdoch has recently undergone a facelift and is now the perfect place to indulge in a great coffee or tea, a quick bite to eat, a sit down breakfast or full restaurant lunch.

It’s also an ideal venue for cocktail parties and conferences, with the added benefit of being able to provide catering for business and social functions.

After undergoing renovation, Club Murdoch now includes:
- a fully operational kitchen;
- original wooden furniture that has been restored in keeping with our environmental principals;
- an alfresco area featuring colourful new furniture and a shade sail;
- two meeting rooms fitted with new AV systems and electronic whiteboards suitable for meetings, training and seminars;
- a reserved area for conducting business appointments or small meetings within the restaurant.

Chef Clive Palmer brings over 25 years of experience and exceptional home style modern healthy cooking and front of house manager Jonathan Clews will bring friendly customer service and reasonable prices for patrons to enjoy.

For further information about Club Murdoch’s meeting rooms, catering and other services visit Club Murdoch’s website www.clubmurdoch.com.au or telephone 9360 2243.

Endeavour Award prize recipient heads to Indonesia

Murdoch PhD student Jodie Goodman flew to Indonesia in March to continue her fieldwork towards a PhD, funded by a 2010 Prime Minister’s Australia Asia Endeavour Award prize.

Ms Goodman is examining the changing dynamics of community development and local resource use in Eastern Indonesia, while undertaking an internship with the Australian government’s ACCESS community development program in Indonesia as part of the award.

Ms Goodman combined Asian Studies and Community Development in her undergraduate studies at Murdoch, which included in-country study with the Australian Consortium for ‘In-Country’ Indonesian Studies (ACICIS) program at Gajah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

She later worked as a volunteer in Indonesia through the Australian government’s Volunteers for International Development Aid (VIDA) program, focusing on ways to improve the participation of marginalised groups in development programs.

Murdoch’s Chair of South-East Asian Studies, Professor David Hill, said the University figured prominently in awards for study in Indonesia at the Prime Minister’s Australia Asia Endeavour Awards this year.

“The awards were a very clear endorsement of the ACICIS, hosted by Murdoch,” Professor Hill said.
Aerobic gymnast champion and Murdoch student, Eloise Kane, has been presented with $1000 from the Elite Athlete Fund, part of the Murdoch University Foundation, by the Vice Chancellor Professor John Yovich.

The money helped Ms Kane represent Australia at the Czech Open Cup (2010 International European Championships in Aerobic Gymnastics) in March. As a result of her performance she will now represent Australia at the World Series event in Italy in May.

As a member of the National Aerobic Gymnastics Squad, she has won international Gold and Silver medals in the Trio and Group Divisions (respectively), and aspires to win a medal in the individual category as well. Ms Kane works on a voluntary basis to promote women in sport, particularly focussing on retention rates of young women in sport. “Ms Kane is an excellent ambassador for Murdoch University and a very deserving first recipient of the Elite Athlete Fund,” said Professor Yovich.

Since 2006 she has spoken at several schools and was a spokesperson at the WomenSport West School Girls’ breakfast. She has been a council board member with WomenSport West for two years, also volunteering as a role model speaking to disadvantaged youth for four years.

In addition to volunteering at the Indian Rim Asian University Games and City to Surf in 2007, Ms Kane performed as part of the Healthy Active Girls Program in 2008. Ms Kane aims to graduate with a Bachelor of Sports Science with a double major in Public Relations and use skills gained through her studies and sporting background to promote sport within the community.