NHMRC PROGRAM GRANT

The Commonwealth Government, through the National Health and Medical Research Council, has allocated more than $100 million for medical research and clinical trials. This includes $80 million for medical research grants, funding for new equipment totalling $9 million, $10 million to support existing clinical trials and grants of $2.5 million for researchers to transform their work into commercial products.

Professors Simon Mallal, Ian James and their colleagues at the Centre for Clinical Immunology and Biomedical Statistics have been successful in attracting more than $5.6 million under the NHMRC Program Grant scheme. This is the first NHMRC Program grant awarded to Murdoch University and the only program grant awarded in Western Australia this year.

The project, entitled **Interactions between adaptable pathogens, drugs and the human host**, aims to investigate a range of issues in the viral diseases HIV and hepatitis C.

In one project, they will continue their study of the genes of different strains of HIV and hepatitis C. In another, they will look at why some drugs used to treat HIV cause life-threatening allergic reactions. In a third, they will investigate the role of drugs in one of the more serious complications of HIV, which is loss of fat tissue from the body.

Their overall aim is to provide the knowledge and tools so doctors can care for people with HIV and hepatitis C in a safer and more effective way.

Chief Investigators for the project are Professor Simon Mallal, Dr David Nolan, Dr Mina John, Professor Ian James, Dr Corey Moore, and Dr Annalise Martin

The Program Grant has a recommended budget of $5,646,950. This funding follows on from the $9.8 million from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for the team to conduct a worldwide hunt for an HIV vaccine earlier this year and $2.3 million dollars awarded to the Centre under the State Centres of Excellence Program.

UNIVERSITIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2005 (WA)

The **Universities Legislation Amendment Bill 2005 (WA)** passed through Parliament on 30th June 2005. On the Governor's assent and proclamation, Western Australia's Universities will be compliant with the National Governance Protocols for Higher Education Providers.

That the legislation has progressed well in advance of the 31st August deadline is a credit to the Minister for Education, The Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich MLC, and the staff in the Department of Education Services.
REGIONAL CAMPUSES

Peel Campus Opening
The Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Dr Brendan Nelson, officially opened Murdoch University’s third campus situated in Peel at a ceremony on 30th June 2005. Commissioning of the Peel Campus completes the vision of an integrated education precinct - also housing Mandurah Senior College and Challenger TAFE - where a wide range of learning opportunities are offered.

The first building of the Peel Campus provides a flexible learning space that can be used for face to face instruction in variable group sizes, supplemented and supported by information technology infrastructure.

The Minister congratulated Murdoch for the innovative approach we have taken in order to provide educational opportunities for the benefit of local industry, education providers and the community at large.

Murdoch continues to play a vital role in providing education opportunities as well as a locus for research and development in the region. The unique alliance we have been able to develop with municipal councils and industry partners in the region that has ensured valuable support for facilities and programs at Peel.

Regional Awards Ceremony
The Regional Awards Ceremony was held at the Murdoch University Rockingham Campus on Wednesday, 27th July 2005. This event provided an opportunity to award Prizes and Scholarships to students attending the Rockingham and Peel Campuses. The Awards Ceremony was a highly successful evening with over 100 people attending. This included students, academics and prize and scholarship donors from the local business and government community.

A notable highlight of the evening was the presentation of the first prizes and scholarships for the Peel Campus. Mr Peter Smith, School of Nursing donor and an ex Murdoch employee, awarded the inaugural School of Nursing prizes and scholarships to local nursing students.

Professor Kateryna Longley recognized the strong support of Alcoa World Alumina Australia by presenting the Alcoa Pinjarra Refinery with a framed Certificate of Appreciation for their sponsorship of the Unitrack Scholarship Program and the Alcoa Kwinana Refinery with a framed Certificate of Appreciation for their sponsorship of the Alcoa Engineering Scholarship Program.

The evening also provided a positive networking environment as the Office of Development secured three additional prizes for the School of Nursing and the City of Rockingham expressed interest in increasing their level of support by offering scholarships for the Unifocus program.

Peel Health Campus Professor of Nursing
Professor Anne McMurray commenced her appointment as Peel Health Campus Professor of Nursing on 11th July 2005. This professorial position is jointly funded by the Peel Health Campus and Murdoch University, reflecting our growing partnership.

Professor McMurray’s most recent appointment was as Professor of Nursing and Acting Head of the School of Pharmacy and she is a former Dean of the Faculty of Nursing and Health at Griffith University. She previously resided for 10 years in Perth, completing a Masters and PhD while working in university Nursing Education. Professor McMurray has had extensive
involvement with international nursing activities as a primary health care consultant to the World Health Organisation and the International Council for Nurses (ICN) and evaluation consultant to ICN in its Leadership for Change program in developing countries. Her teaching, research and publications have been primarily in family and community health in Canada, Australia and Italy.

She will work with the staff at Murdoch University and the Peel Health Campus to lead the development of community focussed research relevant to the Peel Region and the whole of Western Australia.

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### COMMONWEALTH SUPPORTED UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT LOAD

The Commonwealth Government provides funding to Universities based on their actual student load through the Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS). The CGS contribution is set by discipline and funding is provided towards the cost of an agreed number of Commonwealth supported places. The University negotiates with DEST the number of places and the discipline mix that the Commonwealth will support in the context of our mission and strategic direction for course provision. Supported places are generally at the undergraduate level but can also include enabling courses and postgraduate non-research load in negotiated fields (eg Education).

Within this framework, institutions are required to meet two targets:
1. A load target: Commonwealth-supported load must be no more than 5% above the target load set in discussions with the Commonwealth; and
2. A funding target: actual grants under the Commonwealth grants scheme must be no more than 1% above target grants.

The data set below shows Murdoch’s performance against both DEST and internal targets, as at 25th July 2005. From this we can see that the university’s overall actual CGS load has exceeded the target CGS load by 1.63%, with the undergraduate component being 2.75% above target. The actual cluster profile of load has shifted from the profile agreed with DEST, however, the load weighted by “net-of-HECS” DEST funding rates is within the tolerance allowed by DEST.

CGS regional loading is provided for 616 EFTSL and actual regional load (Rockingham and Peel) is 589.3 EFTSL. CGS enabling loading is provided for 61 EFTSL but actual enabling load is only 34 EFTSL.

#### Table 1: 2005 Load Status Against DEST Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Surplus/Deficit</th>
<th>% Surplus/Deficit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CGS Undergraduate Load</strong></td>
<td>6345</td>
<td>6519.20</td>
<td>174.2</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total CGS Load</strong></td>
<td>6620</td>
<td>6727.62</td>
<td>107.62</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Murdoch CGS Load</strong></td>
<td>5852.67</td>
<td>6137.40</td>
<td>284.73</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rockingham CGS Load</strong></td>
<td>591.42</td>
<td>481.90</td>
<td>-109.52</td>
<td>-18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peel CGS Load</strong></td>
<td>175.91</td>
<td>107.40</td>
<td>-68.51</td>
<td>-38.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

• Associate Professor Dave Pethick was awarded the Howard M Yelland Prize for Services to the Beef Industry. This award is made by the Beef Improvement Association of Australia and is considered the most prestigious Beef Industry prize in Australia. It is awarded only in those years when there is considered a worthy nominee and this is the first time that a Western Australian has won the award. Professor Pethick was recognised for his contributions to science and industry, particularly his National and International work on dark cutting beef, regulation of marbling in beef and his lead role in the award winning Meat Standards Australia Beef Grading scheme. Aligned with this work has been a keen focus on delivering the research findings to Industry around Australia with an average of around 25 presentations nationally and internationally each year.

• Professor Jan Thomas, Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic), has been elected a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. This reflects her extensive experience as Director of MercyCare, and completion of the AICD Company Directors Diploma Course.

• The Kwinana Industries Education Partnership (KEIP) has been awarded an Australian School Innovation in Science, Technology and Mathematics (ASISTM) Project Grant of $120,000 for the Real World Science program. Murdoch is a key partner in the project, together with local High Schools, businesses from the Rockingham/Kwinana area and the Cities of Rockingham, Cockburn, Kwinana and Fremantle. Real World Science aims to educate students about ‘real-life’ science and technology with examples from local business and industry. Project activities will include a robotics and plant process management project, cross industry project and tours, and a science and technology lecture series. Associated activity kits will provide valuable curriculum resources for the future. KEIP is housed at Murdoch’s Rockingham Campus which brings staff and students from twelve local schools and representatives from Kwinana industries onto the campus and provides “informal recruiting” opportunities. The Real World Science project will bring many more students to see the campus.

• In a ceremony held at the Rockingham Campus on 2nd August 2005, the Hon Kim Beazley, Member for Brand, awarded eight students with funds from the Mick Young Scholarship Trust (MYST). The Trust was set up in memory of the late Mick Young, a former Member of Parliament and Federal Minister, who sought to enhance educational opportunities for disadvantaged people. Primarily aimed at students in the VET sector, Murdoch is one of only two universities nationally to be invited to participate in the Scholarship scheme. This recognises that Murdoch, with over 500 students with special needs, has one of the best equity records in Australia. The recipients of the 2005 Scholarships are:
  • Rosemary Brabazon (Bachelor of Psychology)
  • William Hayward (Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Chiropractic)
  • Stephanie Jones (Bachelor of Education Primary)
  • Susan MacKenzie (Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Science)
  • Stephanie Marygold (Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Science)
  • Samantha Nordberg (Bachelor of Arts in Community Development)
  • Vanessa Pepe (Bachelor of Legal Studies)
  • Michelle Sadler (Bachelor of Education Primary)
NOTABLE EVENTS

• Professors Andris Stelbovics and Steve Halls and I met with the Hon Dr Judy Edwards MLA, Minister for Environment and Science, on 5th July 2005 to provide background on Murdoch’s research strengths and focus relevant to her portfolio interests.

• The Hon Kim Chance MLA, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, the Midwest and Wheatbelt, hosted a breakfast forum at Murdoch on 16th June 2005. This afforded senior Murdoch staff the opportunity to discuss with the Minister and representatives from business and industry issues of strategic importance for Murdoch, including the Agricultural Research Western Australia initiative.

FOR NOTING

UWA Chancellor
The University of Western Australia has announced that Dr Michael Chaney, the recently retired Chief Executive Officer of Wesfarmers Limited, will be appointed as Chancellor of from 2006. Dr Chaney will succeed Dr Ken Michael who will become Governor of Western Australia in January 2006.

ARWA Joint Venture
The Agricultural Research Western Australia (ARWA) project is progressing strongly and a legal basis for the entity is being established. For political and industrial relations related purposes, ARWA will be established as an unincorporated joint venture. Senate is asked to note this arrangement which is contrary to a literal interpretation of the University’s Policy for the Establishment and Operation of Incorporated Entities. It should also be noted that should any Intellectual Property arise which ARWA would seek to commercialise, ARWA would consider the most appropriate corporate structure and it is likely that the vehicle would be an incorporated entity to quarantine risk.

The joint venture document is being drafted by external lawyers under instruction from the General Counsel.

Vale James Brookes
James Brookes, a member of the Murdoch University staff since 1979, passed away on 16th July 2005. Jim was known as quite a character who will be greatly missed by all in the Grounds Services and other long serving staff who knew him. He was on long service leave and travelling around South Australia and was involved in a fatal car accident. On behalf of the University, the Acting Vice Chancellor sent a letter of condolence to Jim’s family.

RECOMMENDATION

Murdoch University Veterinary Trust - Appointment of Trustees
At the meeting of the Murdoch University Veterinary Trust (MUVT) on 6th July 2005 the Board of Trustees recommended that Professor Jim Reynoldson be put forward by the Vice Chancellor for nomination and approval by Senate for appointment to the MUVT.

I recommend that Senate approve the appointment of Professor Jim Reynoldson to the MUVT for a three year term.