The State Government announced a $28 million funding package in this year’s State Budget for Western Australia’s new agricultural research institute. The capital funding would be spent over four years to develop the institute that is a joint venture between the Department of Agriculture and Curtin, Murdoch and the University of Western Australia.

The allocation will fund the first phase of the institute’s capital works at the Murdoch University campus. An allocation of $1 million will be made available in the 2005/06 year for planning linked specifically to the headquarters and biosecurity facilities but also encompassing the first stage of the Institute facilities.

Funding for the next two phases of the Institute, planned for the UWA’s Crawley site and Curtin’s Bentley site, would be allocated once the first construction phase was under way.

The investment in modern infrastructure and intellectual capacity through stronger research teams will enable WA to develop, attract and retain high calibre scientists and is seen by the State Government as critical in positioning WA to increase its share of national research and development funding.

I hosted a Labor Business Higher Education Round table with The Hon Kim Chance, Minister for Agriculture, at Murdoch on 16th June 2005. Senior University staff and a range of business and industry representatives attended the event, which provided an opportunity to discuss the Government’s broad agricultural policy agenda and the Agricultural Research Western Australia project specifically.

MALAYSIAN RECOGNITION OF MURDOCH DEGREES

The Australian High Commissioner to Malaysia has advised that 16 of Murdoch’s undergraduate degrees in the Arts and Social Science/Humanities are now recognised by the Malaysian Public Services Department (JPA).

As a result, Malaysian students seeking to study for these degrees are now eligible to apply for Malaysian Government scholarships offered by JPA and MARA. Two other major scholarship providers – Petronas and Telecom – are also likely to include these degrees in their schemes. As a result of these undergraduate degrees now being recognised by the JPA, full-time postgraduate awards completed in relevant faculties also become available for recognition.

The 16 degrees are included in an expanded JPA list of Australian qualifications that is the result of joint efforts by AEI in the Kuala Lumpur office and individual Australian universities to increase recognition of Australian qualifications. In brief, this involved a well coordinated and concerted 18-month campaign involving regular representations to JPA, applications from Australian universities for recognition and direct AEI assistance aimed at helping JPA to simplify its recognition process for Australian institutions.
30 SCHOLARSHIP AND 30 PRIZE CAMPAIGN

As part of the University’s 30th Year Celebrations, the Office of Development has set itself the target of securing 30 new Prizes and 30 new Scholarships. The campaign was launched on 24th May 2005 and will be a major project for the Murdoch University Foundation this year.

The Foundation was established to help advance education and research programs at the University for the benefit of the community. Through support for projects such as this, the Foundation will develop an endowment built on donations from the public and corporate sector.

Importantly, the Office of Development is liaising with the Academic Divisions to determine where the greatest need is for new prize and scholarships. They then work cooperatively with the School or Division contact to identify prospective donors for each prize and scholarship, and develop and present a proposal. The Office will also assist in managing the ongoing relationship with the donor.

The Campaign work has commenced and 6 Scholarships and 11 Prizes have already been secured from individuals as well as local government and industry.

CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

ARC Centres of Excellence
The Minister for Education, Science and Training announced eleven successful proposals to establish new ARC Centres of Excellence in 2005, with Australian Government funding of $122 million over the next five years. The Centres will support university-based researchers in Australia establishing extensive national and international research networks involving partners in other universities, research institutes and companies.

A major objective of the ARC Centres of Excellence is to enhance the scale and focus of research that can contribute to the National Research Priorities. All of the new Centres will undertake research in areas of priority.

Murdoch is a major participant in the ARC Centre of Excellence in Antimatter Studies (CAMS), which will be led by scientists at The Australian National University. Other partners include Flinders University, Griffith University, University of Western Australia, CSIRO and ANSTO. Professor Igor Bray will be a Deputy Director of the Centre and Murdoch will receive around $3 million funding over five years.

State Centres of Excellence
As announced at the last Senate meeting, Murdoch has been successful in two applications for funding under the Centres of Excellence in Science and Innovation Program. Funding has been granted for the following Centres:

WA Centre for Comparative Genomics
Chief Investigator: Professor Matthew Bellgard
Funding Granted: $1,455,943 over three years

The WA centre for Comparative Genomics represents a unique approach to research in Comparative Genomics, since it draws together both biomedical and agricultural comparative genomics and bioinformatics activities and expertise in such a way as to promote shared
understanding within and across fields of study and provides excellent opportunities to share Western Australian resources and leverage further income for the state.

Institute for Immunology for Infectious Diseases
Chief Investigator: Professor Simon Mallal
Funding Granted: $2,300,000 over one year

The Centre for Clinical Immunology and Biomedical Statistics (CCIBS) has been operating as a joint Royal Perth Hospital (RPH) and Murdoch University research centre since 1999, rapidly becoming a leading international centre of research excellence. The Centre is now stretching the limits of its science infrastructure and physical resources. The next step for the Centre, which will surmount these constraints and enable considerable transformational growth, is the establishment of an Institute of Immunology and Infectious Diseases (IIID). This Institute will host CCIBS and other research centres, enabling a powerful leverage of science infrastructure.

PEEL GROWTH

The Property Council of Australia commissioned a report on the demand for residential property for the 30 years to 2031, titled Australia on the Move. The report predicts that by 2031 Australia will be dominated by the growth of sea-change cities, with Mandurah a key growth area. It is anticipated that 75% of the homes in Mandurah at 2031 will be built over the 30-year period - a growth rate of 223% relative to its size in 2001.

This growth provides significant opportunities for Murdoch, in student growth of our Peel and Rockingham campuses and in expanding research opportunities. Research may range from investigation of the ability of the region to accommodate growth in a sustainable way, through to links with the increased industry base expected to build in the region.

STAFFING

Professor Gabriel Moens has accepted an offer to join Murdoch University as Professor of Law and Dean of the Law School. He is currently head of the Graduate School of Law at Notre Dame University and will take up the position of Dean in early September.

Professor Moens is an award-winning teacher of law (including as the co-winner of the 1999 Australian Award for University Teaching in law and legal studies) and noted author, with an extensive publications record, including as co-author of The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia Annotated 6th ed 2001 and International Trade and Business: Law, Policy and Ethics, 1998.

He teaches and researches in areas including constitutional law, banking law, European Union law, international commercial law, international arbitration law, comparative law, international business law and human rights law. Professor Moens has taught at a number of universities internationally and is a Membre Titulaire of the International Academy of Comparative Law in Paris.

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- At the invitation of Dr Judy Edwards, Professor Kateryna Longley has been appointed as Chair of the Cockburn Management Council. She will replace Professor George Kailis who has been the Chair for the three years of the Council’s operation. This is a significant
committee and, together with Professor Hall’s appointment, gives Murdoch further prominence in the environmental area.

- Vice Chancellor’s Commendations for Academic Excellence 2004 were awarded at a ceremony held on 23rd May 2005. Commendations are awarded to the top 2% of undergraduate students each year. Each recipient receives a certificate and their achievement is recorded on their academic transcript. This year there were 165 recipients, of these 138 awardees, together with their families and friends, attended the ceremony.
- Associate Professor Ken Harrison has been appointed to the Curriculum Council, representing the Western Australian Higher Education Council (all four public Universities), for a three year term from April 2005. This is a significant period for the Council as it introduces the new outcomes based curriculum. This reflects Ken’s strong experience in teaching and learning, Secondary Schooling, and the Secondary–Tertiary interface.

NOTABLE EVENTS

- I met with the Leader of the Opposition, Kim Beazley, on Thursday, 19th May 2005 when he was on campus to speak to students in the ‘Australian Government’ unit offered by Politics and International Studies. I was able to provide him with an update on the transport options for Rockingham that flow from the southern rail extension. In particular, we indicated options with a focus on the Murdoch University Campus. I sought his support in ensuring that the initial phase of construction of the rail extension includes the light rail going through the Campus.
- A delegation of senior managers from Shanghai Bao Steel Corporation in China visited Murdoch on 19 May 2005. The delegates, who are attending an English language program at Phoenix Academy, toured the South Street Campus and also attended an MBA lecture. The visit was hosted by Professor Gary Martin, Pro Vice Chancellor (Strategy) and the group explored the possibility of professional development and postgraduate programs at Murdoch.
- Professor Gary Martin, Pro Vice Chancellor (Strategy) hosted a visit by Dr Chia Chee Fen, Principal/CEO and Ms Christine Lim, Head, School of Business from KDU College Sdn Bhd between 9 and 12 May 2005. The College, a Murdoch University offshore partner, met with Executive Deans and Heads of Schools to discuss potential areas of future collaboration.
- The Law Society of Western Australia, represented by the Executive Director, Alison Gaines, launched its Indigenous Mentoring Program at a function held on 18th May 2005. The Program aims to aims to provide greater career access to Indigenous law students through one-on-one mentoring and support groups with trained mentors from the judiciary and legal profession. The event was well attended by staff, students and members of the profession, indicating a healthy outlook for the Program. In follow-up to the event, the Society indicated its appreciation of the commitment shown by Murdoch towards the Program.
- Professor Gary Martin signed a Memorandum of Understanding between Murdoch and the Universiti Utara, Malaysia on 23 May 2005. The agreement outlined future collaboration in the area of postgraduate research and supervision.
- Murdoch supported Australia’s National Day of Healing and Reconciliation Week with "Danjo Kalyakool" which in the Nyungar translation means always/solidarity. The day included a traditional Smoking Ceremony, traditional dancing, film screenings, and a display of artwork and wares by local Indigenous artists. There was a strong turnout by Murdoch staff and students.
- Murdoch University will be hosting the monthly meeting of the State Council of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia on Wednesday 8 June 2005. I am a member
of the State Council, and the Council visit various organisations in WA as part of member engagement activities on a monthly basis. Not only is it an opportunity for Councillors to interact with members of the Institute, it’s also an opportunity to gain an insight into the current challenges and issues facing major WA organisations. From Murdoch’s point of view, the visit provides an opportunity to interact with a number of senior members of the accounting profession in WA and to promote some of the activities Murdoch is currently undertaking.

- Dr Jenny De Reuck (School of Social Sciences and Humanities) and students from EGL213-Children’s Theatre produce children’s theatre which is performed at the Nexus Theatre at Murdoch University each year. This year’s production was *Captain Quokka’s Adventures on the High Seas*. Special weekday performances were attended by children from local primary schools and weekend public performances were open to community members and Murdoch staff.

- The Prospective Students’ & Admissions Centre (PSAC) staffed an Undergraduate and Postgraduate Student Recruitment Display in the Garden City Shopping Centre for the week beginning 7th June 2005. The display created much interest across the week. There was particular interest from prospective undergraduate students on Thursday night, and prospective postgraduate students during the day. Records of significant enquiries were kept and many requests for information were given out and returned. PSAC plans to mount the same display in second semester (October-November period) at Garden City and is considering other shopping centres in regional locations, with assistance from Divisional staff.