DEST DIRECTIONS - KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER & RQF

Knowledge Transfer
The Inaugural Knowledge Transfer & Engagement Forum was held on 15 - 16 June 2006. The theme of the Forum was: Examining Higher Education’s Contribution to the Knowledge Economy. I gave the opening address in which I highlighted the critical role universities play in developing the nation’s knowledge base through the training of undergraduate and research students and the generation of new knowledge through research.

The Minister for Science, Education and Training, the Hon Julie Bishop, opened the second day with an address in which she adopted a ‘middle course’ as the preferred approach to knowledge transfer - one which is not ‘overly focussed on the commercialisation of research’, nor one that ‘is too broadly concerned with the general engagement of universities’. The Minister believes that a case could be made to include within the scope of knowledge transfer the development of national information resources and intermediary mechanisms that enable business and community to locate sources and sites of knowledge within the university system.

This is very much in keeping with the preferred IRU Australia approach and the Group will work closely with the Department to further refine the case for further funding in this rapidly expanding area.

Research Quality Framework
The RQF Development Advisory Group met for the first time on 1 June and have made a number of recommendations to the Minister about further developmental work required to deliver a workable RQF model for Australia. The Minister has already accepted the advice of the Advisory Group that the RQF will come into operation in 2008, with the next exercise to be undertaken six years later in 2014. Funding will be distributed to universities based on the outcomes of the research assessment in 2009.

The Development Advisory Group has also formed working groups in the areas of: Metrics; Impact; Information Technology and Modelling. Although timelines are very tight, it is understood that the working groups will consult with the sector where possible. The Minister has advised the sector that she expects to receive formal advice from the Advisory Group on the precise form and operation of the RQF by October this year.

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Professors Anne McMurray and Phil Jennings received Membership of the Order of Australia and Dr Susan Read was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the Queen’s Birthday 2006 Honours List.
- Professor McMurray was awarded Membership for service to nursing, particularly the development of nursing education and community health practices, and as a contributor to professional publications.
- Professor Jennings received the award for service to the environment through the development of strategic conservation policies and initiatives in the areas of wetland and
urban bushland protection, to the establishment of the Regional Parks program, and to environmental education.

Dr Susan Read, a member of staff in the Veterinary Clinic, received her award for service to education through support for local school communities, particularly as a leader of parent groups. This is testimony to the high calibre of staff at Murdoch University and their engagement with our wider community.

- The East Perth Neuropsychological Clinic, jointly run by Murdoch University and The University of Western Australia, has been awarded an Excellence in Treatment Award at the National Drug and Alcohol Awards. The first of its kind in Australia, the Clinic provides free neuropsychological assessments to patients by students enrolled in a postgraduate psychology degree and under the supervision of the Clinic's clinical neuropsychologists.

- Philip Bartlett, a PhD student in Physics, has been awarded the 2005 Bragg Gold Medal for Excellence in Physics. It is awarded for the most outstanding PhD thesis produced by a physics student over the previous 13 months nationally. It is only the second time a winner has come from WA and the first from Murdoch. Philip was supervised by Professors Stelbovics and Bray and he is currently a postdoctoral researcher in Murdoch's node of the national Matter-Antimatter Centre of Excellence.

---

**NOTABLE EVENTS**

- **Professor Anne McMurray, Peel Health Campus Nursing Chair, and Professor Fiona Stanley, Director of the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research (ICHR), launched a major health study that will focus on child development at a ceremony held on 16th May 2006:** The community health study will track hundreds of children from conception to teenage years, giving health experts unparalleled insight into child development and will focus on the growing Peel region which has a high proportion of young families but also a number of health risks in some groups. The project will be run by Professor Anne McMurray who will work closely with child health experts from ICHR. Community support for the project has been strong and the Peel Development Commission has funded a preliminary study to map the scope of services in the region as a basis for the project.

- **On 16 May 2006, I met with Mr Kawanabe, Executive Managing Director of the Hyogo International Association. Murdoch has strong links with Hyogo Prefecture through our Japanese Studies section, in particular through our involvement with the management of the visit of 250 students from the 'Floating University' to our campus on a bi-annual basis.**

- **At a recent Practice of Leadership Seminar run by the WA Club, Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton delivered the key note presentation: The Practice of Leadership Examples of Recent History. He then facilitated the Practice of Leadership Workshop/Tutorial component of the Seminar.**

- **The WA Chapter of the Australasian Research Management Society and the Office of Research and Development hosted a seminar on Western Australia's strategy and future trends in the field of BioFuels. I introduced the Minister for Energy, Science and Innovation, the Hon Fran Logan, who gave the keynote address in which he outlined the Western Australian Government's main focus and priorities for 2006 for Science and Innovation. A panel discussion followed that included representatives from the university sector, Department of Industry and Resources and the BioFuels Taskforce. The seminar was well**
attended by a broad spectrum of interested people from the general public, business, government and Murdoch staff.

- 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 *The Secret of the Snottygobbles: A Fairy Story*. Special weekday performances were attended by children from local primary schools and weekend public performances were open to community members and Murdoch staff.

- The IRU Australia Science and Technology Forum was held on 29 and 30 June 2006. There were over 70 participants with around 60 present for the entire two day Forum. One of the key aims was to share best practice models. This was reflected in the 31 presentations which comprised eight 'feature presentations' and 23 presentations of best practice. Dr Rob Morrison, President, South Australia Zoological Society, Science Communicator, Board Member of the Australian Science Media Centre and Visiting Scholar, Flinders University Chaired the Forum. Dr Thomas Barlow, former Science Adviser to Dr Brendan Nelson and author of the newly released book "*The Australian Miracle: An Innovative Nation Revisited*" spoke at Forum dinner.

Other external speakers included Professor Richard Johnstone, Executive Director of the Carrick Institute, Dr Susannah Elliott, CEO of the Australian Science Media Centre, and Mr Bradley Smith, Executive Director of FASTS.

- Fourteen students and two qualified chiropractors from the School of Chiropractic spent two weeks in West Bengal treating 1,000 children, aged between two and 14, and their families who make a living by breaking boulders into pebbles for roads and construction. The students were supported by Alcoa (who provided 300 safety glasses), the Chiropractic Association of Australia (who helped pay for medical equipment) and primary school students from across the metropolitan area (who donated clothes, hats, toys, hygiene products and sporting goods) as well as the Division of Health Sciences and the Alumni, Careers and Employment Centre who helped defray travel costs.

---

**INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS**

- The University has entered a Memorandum of Understanding with Lund University in Sweden. The agreement was signed by Professor Gary Martin and Professor Bjorn Wittenmark, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Lund University. The agreement will came into force on 1 June 2006 and is for a five year term. Any extension will be made by mutual consent. Areas of cooperation will include various activities such as collaborative research, lectures, exchange of scholars and researchers, graduate and undergraduate students, exchange of information. Specific agreements will be developed mutually for any specific projects.

- A student exchange agreement has recently been signed by Professor Gary Martin and Mag Werner Jungwirth, representing Fachhochschule Wiener Neustadt. The agreement commenced on 27 April 2006 for 3 years, with automatic renewal for another 3 years. The exchange provides up to two semester-long places or one year-long place for each year.

- The University of Turku in Finland has signed a student exchange agreement with Murdoch Professor Dr Keijo Vitanen, Rector, and Mr Risto Miliumaki, Head of International Affairs, signed on behalf of Turku. The agreement commenced from 10 April 2006 and provides up to two semester-long places or one year-long place annually for the three year term of the agreement.
• A student exchange agreement providing two semester-long or one year-long placements annually has been signed with Jonkoping International Business School, Sweden. Professor Rolf A Lundin, Dean and Managing Director, entered into the agreement on behalf of Jonkoping. It commenced on 30 May 2006 for a three year term with automatic renewal for another 3 years.

• The University of Victoria, Canada entered into a student exchange agreement with Murdoch on 16 May 2006 that provides two semester long or one year long placement for each of the next five years. The agreement was signed by Professor Gary Martin, representing Murdoch, and Dr James Anglin, Associate Vice President Academic and Student Affairs and Director, International Affairs, and Professor James Cassels, Vice President Academic and Provost, on behalf of the University of Victoria.