INTRODUCTION

The first half of 2015 has been both challenging and inspiring. I led the University into a conversation about change, given projections about future funding, shifting student expectations and evolutions in learning technology. This conversation has confirmed for me that UWA is indeed home to some truly innovative minds and I have renewed confidence that we have what it takes to be a progressive institution in an uncertain world.

However, this conversation has had to start with a good look in the mirror, focusing on what we do and how we do it. On reflection, it is clear that if we are to ensure that the University's second century is as successful as its first, we will need to adapt and innovate.

Universities have always been places of exploration, challenge and change, even as they have been institutions layered with history, reputation and tradition. In an era of unprecedented technological advance and behavioural and organisational adaptation, we will ignore these external forces at our peril. Our challenge is to find and strike the right balance between continuity and change.

We must avoid faddism, but avoid fogeyism as well. We must respect, cherish and draw on our past, but we must resist the temptation to replay it, however glorious it was, because it is not the lived experience of today’s students, teachers and researchers.

The work we have been carrying forward across the University this year – refreshing our ‘brand identity’, restructuring our administrative services, improving our ‘digital presence’ for students and teachers – though unsettling for some, is essential to keep us relevant to the needs and expectations of the 21st century community that we serve.

It is also essential for the financial health of the University. We currently spend more than we earn (and we spend over $2 million every day on salaries and over $1 million on other activities and services) so we must continue to increase revenue and contain costs. We do, of course, benefit from past gifts and bequests, and the University’s endowments and gifted funds now amount to approximately $800 million, but the great majority of the $35 million or so that we earn annually from these endowments is pre-committed to supporting student scholarships and academic positions.

To put this in perspective, even if we unilaterally cancelled all those scholarships and suspended all those academic positions and even if we had the authority to divert these funds into general operating revenue (which we are prohibited from doing) they would keep the university operating for barely ten days. That is why I have to spend a lot of my time focussed on how to ensure our academic programs are relevant and attractive to today’s students because student fees make up 70% of our revenue, and determine whether the University is financially viable now and into the future.

I think we can be confident that the curriculum change introduced in 2012 is well suited to the needs and expectations of today’s undergraduate and graduate students, and will continue to provide them with an excellent launchpad to their future lives and careers. At the same time, we must acknowledge that there are many disruptive forces circling around the higher education sector such as free online courses and new for-profit universities, and we need to keep a close watching brief to ensure we are not blind-sided. If we can do that, then we will ensure that the University can continue to educate and develop its students, produce
new research, generate new ideas, and contribute to the vitality and growth of the broader community.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

Higher Education Reforms

I was disappointed that the Federal Government’s Higher Education Bill was rejected by the Senate for a second time. A deregulated tertiary sector would allow universities rather than government to set their own fees and determine their own destiny. The greater autonomy would help universities better compete in a globally competitive market by enabling them to enhance the student experience, conduct more high-impact research, and attract the best academics from around the world. Australia’s university sector had been fully behind the reform proposals and the Bill’s rejection simply delivers us further uncertainty.

Internal Operations – Sustainable Futures

In April 2015 “Sustainable Futures” was launched as an integrated program of University-wide projects prioritised by the UWA Executive for implementation over the next 3 years. The majority of these projects were developed in response to findings of a broad functional review and will support delivery of the University’s Strategic Plan.

Internationalisation

UWA is a globally recognized university and Perth increasingly is seen as a globally interconnected city. To meet the foundational goals of the University – ‘to advance the welfare and prosperity of the people’ – we have to think and act globally. We must prepare our students, both domestic and international, for an internationalized labour market, we must support our researchers to engage with their peers regardless of where they are located, and we must support business and government as they further develop linkages across the Indo-Pacific region.

In 1995, the University determined that international students should not exceed 15% of total enrolment – we would internationalise, but only to a limited degree. Although we have marginally exceeded this threshold (17.4% of students at Crawley are international) we now lag behind all our peer universities in the degree to which we have embraced internationalization (University of Melbourne, for example, is 31%, University of Queensland 25%).

We have recently adopted a new Internationalisation Strategy that commits UWA to: increasing the proportion of international students to 23% of the total by 2020; increasing the proportion of students with experience of study abroad and student exchange from the current level of 22% to 30% by 2020; increasing by 50% the number of formal research contracts with overseas partner organisations by 2020.

UWA Brand

On 6 May, the University unveiled a refreshed logo and brand to reflect its position as a contemporary place of teaching, learning and research, and a global hub of excellence. The new brand has featured across all media platforms, including a television commercial, integrated digital campaign and social media as well campus-based activities. The new brand message: “Pursue impossible” was aimed at both students and staff to encapsulate all that UWA offers in a highly competitive global market. Pursue Impossible reflects a core
strength of UWA: our ability to go beyond imparting knowledge to our students, to help individuals achieve beyond their expectations. The University consulted with students, academics and researchers as well as business and community partners and found while the UWA brand remained strong and worth protecting, it needed to meet the needs of contemporary communication channels and to sharpen key messaging. One of our core messages to students is: if you come to UWA prepare to be stretched beyond your discipline, to gain a deeper understanding of yourself and the world at large.

**In the Zone and State of Mind**

The Hon Colin Barnett, Premier of Western Australia opened *In the Zone*, the University's premier forum on geopolitics and international trade, on 1 May. A group of outstanding speakers and thinkers discussed this year's theme of *Capital Ideas for the Twenty-first Century*. The forum will next year be held in Jakarta as well as Perth, reflecting a need to continue to strengthen Australia's relationships with Indo-Pacific countries in general, and Indonesia in particular. The decision to facilitate two forums within the region will continue the success of the initiative this year, when for the first time *In the Zone* was held out of Australia as well as in Perth. *Venture Asia* took place at the headquarters of Google Asia Pacific in Singapore on 13 April. The Premier of Western Australia, the Hon Colin Barnett, was among distinguished guests, and UWA's Energy and Minerals Institute took the opportunity to release the *State of Mind* report. The report argues that a resources-led economy is also a knowledge-based economy and seeks to shift the economic and civic conversation from a focus on commodity prices, cycles and volumes to longer term changes and benefits in knowledge-led work – in design thinking, remote operations, complex engineering, data science.

**Open Day**

The University warmly opened its doors to its community on Sunday 9 August, welcoming visitors to explore the campus; to learn more about the University’s courses, admission requirements and scholarships; and to celebrate UWA’s relationship with the people of Western Australia. It was a great day for the University, hosting over 20,000 visitors who came along to discover what we offer and to participate in faculty events, demonstrations and tours. Our campus was transformed with a vibrant buzz of activities and a festival-like atmosphere – there was something for everyone. I wrote to all staff and students the next day to thank and congratulate the hard working teams who did a brilliant job organising this successful event.

**CONTENTIOUS ISSUES**

**Australian Consensus Centre**

In early April the University announced it had secured $4 million in Federal Government funding to establish an Australia Consensus Centre (ACC) to undertake detailed economic cost benefit analysis into many of Australia’s, and the world’s, biggest development challenges. However, the news attracted a mixed reaction from staff, students and the general public. The scale of the strong and passionate reaction was unprecedented.

I met and talked to staff, students, alumni and members of the public and emphasised that the purpose of the ACC was not to study climate change, that the University was not providing any direct funding to the Centre, and that that Bjorn Lomborg would not be involved in its day-to-day operations. Nonetheless, strong opposition to the Centre
remained, and I therefore formed the view that the Centre was untenable as it lacked the support needed across the University and the broader academic community to meet its contractual obligations and deliver value for money for Australian taxpayers.

By its very nature a centre of this sort requires co-operation of a wide range of people across many fields. I am disappointed that such work cannot be undertaken at UWA. On 8 May I spoke to the Federal Government and Bjorn Lomborg advising them of the barriers that currently exist to the creation of the Centre and the University’s decision to cancel the contract and return the money to the government.

Changes to Arts Majors

Concern was expressed by staff, students and alumni regarding changes to three Major offerings within the Arts Faculty. The Review of the Schools of Humanities and Social science in 2013 noted that only relatively small numbers of students were enrolled in the Gender Studies, European Studies and Medieval & Early Modern Studies majors.

In implementing the recommendations of the Review, the Faculty was required to conduct a further review of these majors. A working party conducted the necessary review, which was discussed several times by the Arts Teaching & Learning Committee. This working party’s recommendation, endorsed by the Faculty of Arts Executive, was to teach out the stand alone majors in these areas, and then over the next few years to transition 11 out of the 16 units currently taught in the majors, into larger majors (mainly History and English).

In effect, most of the course content will continue to be available and we believe that in many cases the units will attract more students than they do currently. A transition plan has been discussed with staff in the School of Humanities. I can confirm that there are no staffing changes resulting from this process, and all students currently enrolled in the Gender Studies, European Studies and Medieval & Early Modern Studies majors will be able to complete their majors as planned.

TEACHING

Education Futures

On 20 July, UWA launched a new virtual learning environment and course management system called Blackboard. The transition to Blackboard from Moodle has been taking place over several months under the leadership of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education), Professor Gilly Salmon, and has been actively embraced by the University’s teachers and tutors. This web-based server software features course management, customisable open architecture, and scalable design and its purpose is to enhance courses traditionally delivered face-to-face with online elements by providing users with a platform for communication and sharing content.

A wide range of training, through conferences and workshops, has been provided to staff by the Education Futures team to assist them through this transition. I am confident that this significant change will greatly improve the education experience for both UWA students and teachers. Concurrent to this transition, UWA teachers have been participating in “Carpe Diem workshops”, a design process enabling unit teams to understand, develop and implement forward-looking student-centred learning designs.
Student Surveys of Teaching and Learning

Recently the 2016 Good Universities Guide was released and I was pleased to learn that UWA had received five stars for areas such as 'student demand', 'starting salary', 'research grants' and 'research intensity'. Unfortunately, we retained a 1-star rating for 'teaching' and received a 1-star rating for 'overall experience', which is down from two stars last year.

Of course, we are taking a number of actions to improve our ratings for teaching quality. There is some indication that some of these are starting to work: While the Good Universities Guide is certainly an important rating, it is based on data collected from graduates up to two years ago and does not include any responses from any students who have studied under the new curriculum model that was introduced in 2012.

Our internal survey of student opinion of teaching, SURF, reveals a different trend. The 2014 SURF results indicate positive growth in a number of key indicators. The results show an all-time high for percentage of “excellent” ratings against the key “overall satisfaction” question, and the lowest percentage of “unsatisfactory” ratings against this question since 2006. I commend all UWA teaching staff for these improved SURF results and highlight the ongoing work to continue these improvements.

As well as the impressive work taking place in faculties and schools, the Centre for Education Futures is implementing a number of key projects to underpin both short-term and long-term developments in our teaching and the student experience. These include the extensive technical work to prepare our new digitised environment and unit design workshops for small and large groups. These results contribute significantly to our Strategic Goal of a world-class education for UWA students.

RESEARCH

Rankings

UWA subject areas of Agriculture and Forestry, Psychology, Education and Earth and Marine Sciences have all ranked in the top 50 in this year’s QS World University Rankings by Subject. UWA featured in the world’s elite (top 200) institutions in 23 of the 34 subjects assessed. Overall 3,551 universities were evaluated and 894 were ranked; more than 100 million citation attributions were analysed and more than 14,000 programs were verified.

UWA particularly excelled in Agriculture & Forestry (ranked 41 globally, an increase in its position from 101-151 last year) and Psychology, which was ranked at 27. Other subject areas that featured in the top 51-100 included Accounting and Finance, Biological Sciences, Business and Management studies, Environmental Science, Engineering - Civil and Structural, Medicine and Law.

We are focused on doing the best we can and we know that as a leading research organisation we have the responsibility to drive research infrastructure in WA and push the boundaries of understanding and knowledge.

On 15 August, the 2015 Academic Ranking of World Universities was released and we were pleased to learn that UWA remains as one of the world's top 100 universities. We have increased our overall rank, from 88 to 87, and our position in Life and Agricultural Sciences is still in the top 25. I conveyed my sincere thanks to all our researchers, teaching staff and professional staff for their consistently exceptional work. Rankings are important as they
help establish us as a leading university locally, nationally and internationally. In an increasingly competitive Higher Education sector, this recognition gives us a real advantage.

ARC Funding

Two of our leading research groups secured nearly $10 million in new funding from the Nation’s peak research funding body, the Australian Research Council (ARC) as part of the ARC’s Industrial Transformation Research Program (ITRP), which aims to enable Australia’s best researchers to work collaboratively with industry to deliver important outcomes.

The Minister for Education and Training, the Hon. Christopher Pyne MP announced that $5 million would be awarded to the UWA led ARC Research Hub for Offshore Floating Facilities and a further $4.6 million to the ARC Training Centre for Liquefied Natural Gas Futures. The ARC Research Hub for Offshore Floating Facilities researches critical engineering challenges for offshore oil and gas projects in remote deep water locations by creating improved designs and operating procedures.

The ARC Training Centre for Liquefied Natural Gas Futures aims to deliver projects and training to enable future Australian Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) production from reserves in deep water, at small or remote on-shore locations, with greater efficiency, less environmental impact, and at lower cost than currently possible.

This funding reinforces the leading role of UWA researchers in contributing to the future economic development of the State and the Nation.

Start Something

Through the UWA IQ initiative, a new program designed to encourage and foster entrepreneurship among researchers and post-graduate research students was launched in July. The Start Something initiative involves a series of speaking events and workshops which will culminate next month with selected participants using newly acquired skills to develop their ideas into potential business opportunities, from solving social problems to developing the next world-wide app.

We must promote an entrepreneurial culture, provide researchers with an opportunity to develop new skills and tools and provide links to the Perth entrepreneur ecosystem. We want to help our researchers develop their ideas and research outcomes into something that might have a commercial or social value. Literally, we want to help get something started.

African Research Cluster

Australia’s relationship was Africa boosted in May by the launch of an Africa Research Cluster. The inter-disciplinary research group brings together UWA expertise on a range of issues relevant to Africa including climate change, development, governance and law, natural resources, heritage, migration and agriculture.

The research group will be coordinated by Dr David Mickler, from UWA’s Political Science and International Relations program. Dr Mickler’s research focuses on Australia’s engagement with the diverse and resources-rich continent. Africa-related research in Australia is an emerging field, reflecting a growing and diverse African diaspora here, a deepening of diplomatic and commercial relations and a recognition of Africa’s rising influence in world affairs. UWA’s Energy and Minerals Institute is supporting the work of the research cluster.
The Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation – Research Centre to Support Breastfeeding

Mothers, breastfeeding infants, families and the community will benefit from the creation of major new research positions in human lactation, as a result of an $8.6 million donation provided by The Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation.

The Foundation’s decision to support UWA with this leadership donation is testament to the internationally renowned research in human lactation conducted by Emeritus Professor Peter Hartmann. The research team will include an Endowed Chair in Human Lactology (the first in the world), a postdoctoral position and a postgraduate opportunity. It will be complemented by a Chair and supporting positions at the University of Zurich with the two research centres working collaboratively to advance global knowledge of breastfeeding and its long-term health benefits to mothers and babies.

The research centres will be focused on Biochemistry at UWA and Medicine at UZH. With the establishment of the research centres at UWA and University of Zurich, medical practitioners will soon be able to draw upon new evidence which will allow them to improve the diagnosis and treatment of mothers experiencing breastfeeding difficulties as well as promoting the scientific and public recognition of human milk nutrition.

PEOPLE AND RESOURCES

Queen’s Birthday Honours

Six staff members and 10 graduates of The University of Western Australia have been honoured by their inclusion on the 2015 Queen’s Birthday Honours List. Professors Nigel Laing, Karen Simmer, Paul Abbott and Paolo Ferrari were appointed Officers in the General Division (AO) of the Order of Australia.

Senior Principal Research Fellow and head of the Neuromuscular Diseases Group at UWA’s Centre for Medical Research, based at the Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research, Professor Laing was recognised for “distinguished service to medicine in the field of neuromuscular disorders, as an academic and researcher, to medical education and through contributions to professional associations”.

Professor Simmer is co-director of UWA’s Centre for Neonatal Research and Education and Professor of Newborn Medicine in UWA’s School of Paediatrics and Child Health. She was recognised for “distinguished service to medicine in the field of paediatrics, particularly neonatal and perinatal nutrition, to medical education as an academic, researcher and clinician, and to the community”.

A former head of UWA’s School of Dentistry and director of the Oral Health Centre of Western Australia, Professor Abbott was recognised for “distinguished service to clinical dentistry, and to higher education, as an academic, researcher and author, to endodontics as a practitioner, and to professional organisations”.

Based at Fremantle Hospital with UWA’s School of Medicine and Pharmacology, Clinical Professor Ferrari was recognised for “distinguished service to medicine in the discipline of nephrology, as a clinical scientist, to the establishment of innovative renal transplantation programs, and to medical education”.

Two staff members were appointed as Members (AM) of the Order of Australia: Emeritus Professor Dennis Haskell and Clinical Professor Richard Herrmann.
A senior honorary research fellow in UWA’s School of Humanities, Emeritus Professor Haskell was recognised for “significant service to literature, particularly poetry, as an academic, author, editor and critic, to tertiary education, and to inter-cultural understanding”.

Professor Herrmann, from UWA’s School of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, was recognised for “significant service to medicine, particularly to haematology as a clinician, to bone marrow transplantation services, and to education”.

Four graduates were also appointed as Members (AM) in the Order of Australia: Law alumni Keith Chapman and Laurie James, Science graduate Tony Tate and Sabina Shugg (MBA). Another six graduates were awarded a Medal (OAM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia: Anita Chong (BA, DipEd), Diana de Vos-Beck (BA), Denise Follett (BA, BPsych, DipEd, MPsych), Patricia Kotai-Ewers (BA, MPhil), Dr John Yiannakis (BA, PhD) and dental science graduate Dr Peter McKerracher.

Hall of Fame

Since the last Ordinary Meeting, former Vice-Chancellor UWA, Emeritus Professor Alan Robson AO CitWA has been inducted into the WA Science Hall of Fame. Professor Robson is one of the nation’s leading science educators and held key positions – including chairman of the Group of Eight Universities – enabling him to develop Australia-wide science research and education. As an agricultural scientist, Professor Robson’s early research on plant nutrition and soil fertility contributed to farmers’ prosperity and the success of the grains industry.

In the WA Science Hall of Fame, he joins previous inductees including Professor Lyn Beazley AO, Professor Stephen Hopper AC FLS FTSE, Dr Bernard Bowen AM, Professor Fiona Stanley AC, Professor Ian Constable AO, Emeritus Professor John de Laeter AO, Professor Barry Marshall AC and Dr Robin Warren AC.

Premier’s Science Awards

UWA’s reputation for producing leaders in science research and teaching was recognised on 21 August when three staff members were recognised in the 2015 Premier’s Science Awards. Premier Colin Barnett announced Professor Mark Cassidy, from UWA’s Centre for Offshore Foundation Systems (COFS) was Scientist of the Year, while Dr Hannah Moore from the Telethon Kids Institute was named Woodside Early Career Scientist of the Year.

One of the world’s leading mathematicians and a former Scientist of the Year, Professor Cheryl Praeger, was also inducted into the Western Australian Science Hall of Fame.

These Awards are testament to the excellence of our academics and reinforced the University’s place as the pre-eminent research and teaching institution in the State. The Premier’s Science Awards (formerly the Western Australian Science Awards) were established in 2002 to recognise and celebrate the achievements of the Western Australian science community.

Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono

Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, former president of the Republic of Indonesia, has accepted roles as a visiting Professor at The University of Western Australia and as a Senior Fellow with the Perth USAsia Centre, expanding opportunities for deeper regional understanding and cooperation. Dr Yudhoyono was the Republic of Indonesia's sixth president and the country's first directly elected president entering office in 2004 and serving two consecutive
five-year terms. He left office in October 2014. The Perth USAsia Centre plans to expand its focus on Indonesia in 2015, featuring programming that highlights the importance of Australia-Indonesia relations and identifies areas for cooperation and enhanced diplomacy.

Inaugural Forrest Scholars

In May, Andrew and Nicola Forrest announced the first recipients of the prestigious Forrest Research Foundation Scholarships – with the five recipients flying in from around the world to accept their scholarship.

In October 2013, the Forrests made what is believed to be the largest single philanthropic donation in Australian history – $65 million to attract the best minds to Western Australia. Forrest Research Foundation Scholarships are available to international and Australian students who wish to undertake a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at one of Western Australia’s five universities. The Forrest gift underlines their belief that “only education can be the final key to eliminate poverty in the world and raise the universal standard of living”.

The scholarship recipients are:

* Dulce Vargas Landin, from Mexico, who is studying the epigenome in brain function;
* Timothy Hammer, from the US, studying species survival of an arid Australian plant genus;
* Trung Viet Nguyen, from Vietnam, studying DNA methylation in cancer development;
* Sophie Monnier, from France, studying exploration geophysics focused on ocean bottom seismic data acquisition; and
* UWA International student Grace Goh, from Singapore, studying circadian rhythms and temperature in metabolic function.

40 Under 40

An ophthalmologist who graduated from UWA and founded Lions Outback Vision was named First Amongst Equals in the 2015 40Under40 Awards. Dr Angus Turner took the top prize from a strong field at a gala dinner attended by more than 800 business people and nominees. He was recognised for establishing Lions Outback Vision in 2010 which provides specialist eye health services in regional and remote communities to nearly 5,000 people a year in the Pilbara, Kimberley, Great Southern and Goldfields. Dr Turner completed his medical studies at UWA before studying evidence-based medicine at Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar. His goal is to eliminate blindness and vision loss.

Dalai Lama

The University was delighted to have welcomed to campus the internationally respected figure, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet, on 15 June who spoke on ‘The importance of Education’, in an event arranged by UWA’s Student Guild. UWA students and staff, and several hundred high school students, had the opportunity to attend, with an online stream of the event also available to the public and those not at the event.

Staff and students were able to ask questions of His Holiness, for insights and advice into the challenges facing the education of the human race, today and in the future. The Dalai Lama is a man of peace, having been awarded the distinguished Templeton Prize for his commitment to interfaith relations and the Nobel Peace Prize for his non-violent struggle for the liberation of Tibet. He has consistently advocated policies of non-violence, and has received recognition of his message of peace, inter-religious understanding and compassion worldwide.

Benefactor Wall
The Benefactor Wall, unveiled on Wednesday 6 May, celebrates the major benefactors who followed in our founder’s footsteps, the people who have supported UWA in becoming the international leader it is today. More than 100 years ago, UWA founder Sir John Winthrop Hackett saw limitless potential in our State, and people who were eager to explore new intellectual frontiers. This Wall is a daily reminder for the entire UWA community, of those who believe in us and support our mission to explore, teach and inspire.

Among our noted benefactors are people like Frederick Hadley, whose travelling scholarship continues to empower postgraduate medical students more than 50 years after it was first awarded. Frederick’s extensive collection of irreplaceable medical specimens remains invaluable for teaching and research, and was the founding collection of the FA Hadley Pathology Museum.

Western Australian agricultural pioneers, Sir Edward and Lady Beatrice Lefroy, were also leaders in agricultural research and education. The couple were instrumental in establishing the University Institute of Agriculture. Today, UWA is ranked first amongst Australian universities in the ‘Life and Agricultural Sciences’ category of the Academic Ranking of World Universities.

Behind every name on our Benefactor Wall is an extraordinary story. It is a beautiful reminder that our University is built from and for our community. Next time you are near Winthrop Hall, take some time to visit the Wall, located opposite the entrance to the Hall, under the arches of the Vice-Chancellor.

**Poche Indigenous Health**

The UWA Poche Centre of Indigenous Health hosted its first national event on 24 July, which gave us an opportunity to belatedly celebrate the opening of the Centre via the generosity of Mrs Kay and Greg Poche. The Poche’s generosity not only delivers UWA the opportunity to undertake research in the area of Indigenous health but gives a greater gift to the future lives of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Poche directors and researchers from 5 Australian universities came to Perth for a national network meeting of Poche centres and guests were also treated to moving speeches by Mr Ken Wyatt AM MP, 5th year medical student Vinka Barunga and Mrs Kay van Norton Poche, who proved that generosity also comes from within as she thanked her guests for their work in helping close the gap in life expectancy and achieving health equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

**New Chair for the Energy and Minerals Institute**

Leading Australian scientist and former head of the CSIRO, Dr Megan Clark AC was appointed to chair the board of the Energy and Minerals Institute (EMI) in May. The appointment of Dr Clark as Chair of the EMI Board of Trustees is a huge boost to the Institute’s capability and status as Australia’s leading collaborative research facilitator focused on the minerals and energy sectors.

Her distinguished experience as a scientist and industry leader will be invaluable to the continuing success of the Energy and Minerals Institute and its role in creating strong and valuable partnerships between industry and the University. Dr Clark has had an extensive career in the private and public sectors in Australia, combining expertise in the metals and mining business with high-level experience in science, research and technology.

**The Metcalf Prize**
In May, Professor Ryan Lister was awarded a $50,000 Metcalf Prize, from the National Stem Cell Foundation of Australia, in recognition of his leadership in stem cell research. The Metcalf Prize is a prestigious award that honours exceptional contributions made to stem cell research. It is presented to only two recipients in Australia every year that have carried out groundbreaking work in the field. Professor Lister generated the first comprehensive maps of the human epigenome, finding that the chemical signposts that comprise the epigenome differ between embryonic stem cells and specialised adult cells.

Churchill Fellowship

Professor David Mackey, one of the world’s leading researchers in the genetics of eye disease, has received a 2015 Churchill Fellowship. Managing Director of the Lions Eye Institute at The University of Western Australia, Professor Mackey will travel to the United Kingdom in 2016 to look at how Australian patients with rare eye diseases could participate in promising gene therapy research trials being conducted overseas. He will visit leading ophthalmic gene therapy centres in London and Oxford to evaluate their research protocols to determine what could be conducted in Australia.

Churchill Fellowships allow talented Australians to engage globally and bring innovative ideas and solutions back to the nation.

Young Pharmacist of the Year

PhD student, Amy Page of UWA’s Centre for Health and Ageing has been named the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia’s Young Pharmacist of the Year. Amy was awarded her prize in Sydney in recognition of her ‘unique balance’ of academic, clinical and policy development work. One of Amy's PhD supervisors, Associate Professor Christopher Etherton-Beer said Amy set a great example to both established and aspiring pharmacists.

Humboldt Research Award

Professor Karol Miller, from UWA’s Laboratory for Intelligent Systems for Medicine and School of Mechanical and Chemical Engineering, has been elected a Laureate of the prestigious Humboldt Research Award for his pioneering work in the field of biomechanics of soft tissues for surgical simulation.

In 2013, Professor Miller and colleagues at UWA and Harvard Medical School developed a new technique to help neurosurgeons predict how the brain would move during surgery. The Humboldt award, named after the Prussian nature researcher, scientist and explorer Alexander von Humboldt, is granted in recognition of a researcher's entire achievements to date and for academics whose fundamental discoveries, new theories, or insights have had a significant impact on their own discipline and who are expected to continue producing cutting-edge achievements in the future.

Performance of the Year – 2015 Art Music Awards

UWA Clarinet soloist Ashley Smith won ‘Performance of the Year’ at the prestigious 2015 Art Music Awards in Sydney in August. Ashley won for his performance of a Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra composed by UWA alumni Lachlan Skipworth which he presented with UWA partner the Western Australian Symphony Orchestra.

The annual Arts Music Awards celebrate the achievements and creative successes of composers, performers and practitioners in the genres of contemporary art music, jazz and experimental music. Ashley, who is a UWA graduate, was UWA Artist in Residence in 2014
and is a School of Music Lecturer, has been hailed a ‘rising star’ by the world’s leading clarinet manufacturer, Buffet-Crampon. From here Ashley said it’s straight back to teaching UWA students and he has just taken up a new role with national ensemble Southern Cross Soloists who will perform around Australia during the remainder of the year.

**Inaugural Director of McCusker Centre for Citizenship**

On August 21 I was pleased to announce that Michelle Scott will be the inaugural Director of the McCusker Centre for Citizenship. Michelle was WA’s Commissioner for Children and Young People from 2007 to 2013 and brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the role of Director. She has 30 years’ experience working in the non-government and government sectors including more than a decade as a chief executive officer.

The McCusker Centre for Citizenship at The University of Western Australia will be the first of its kind in Australia. Funded by a generous gift from Malcolm and Tonya McCusker through the McCusker Charitable Foundation, the Centre will build on the University’s founding vision to advance the prosperity and welfare of the people by creating a culture of giving. The Centre will aim to create community-minded thinkers and leaders focused on addressing community challenges; provide students with a transformative and diverse educational experience in which community engagement is integral; encourage and provide opportunities for students and staff to engage in their local and broader communities; and liaise between community, not-for-profits and students and staff.

**Mid West Business Excellence Awards**

In June, the WA Centre for Rural Health (WACRH) picked up the final accolade under the ‘Not for Profit’ category during this year’s Mid West Business Excellence Awards, for innovative rural placement programs and their unique cultural immersion components for Allied Health students. The Award highlighted the Centre’s efforts to engage undergraduate health students in a number of activities and experiences to help them become rural-work ready. WACRH’s non-traditional placement models are supported through inter-professional learning activities where students from various disciplines work closely together to deliver integrated patient care while addressing health care gaps in the community.

**Childcare Centres**

Under the National Quality Standard (NQS), two childcare centres at The University of Western Australia - the UWA Early Learning Centre and Unicare have received a top rating of ‘excellent’, the highest possible rating a centre can achieve for early childhood education and care under NQS. The NQS assessment and ratings process, which is carried out by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) via the State regulatory authority ECRU (Education and Care Regulatory Unit).

The ratings cover long day care, family day care, outside school hours care and some preschools and kindergartens. Of the top 86 centres named, the two centres at UWA received the top rating of ‘excellent’ for having exceeded the NQS across several criteria assessed. The results are pleasing and highlighted the high quality of service that the childcare centres at UWA provide to families and the community.

**The Giants win a Helpmann Award**

The Perth International Arts Festival’s biggest-ever event won a Helpmann Award in June for Best Special Event as well as 13 prestigious Helpmann Award nominations for artists and performers at the 2015 Festival. The nominations included Best Special Event Award for The Incredible and Phenomenal Journey of The Giants to the Streets of Perth by Royal de
Luxe, which opened the 2015 Perth International Arts Festival. The annual Helpmann Awards recognise distinguished artistic achievement and excellence in the many disciplines of Australia’s vibrant live performance sectors, including musical theatre, contemporary music, comedy, cabaret, opera, classical music, theatre, dance and physical theatre.