



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE



THE IMPACT OF GIVING

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Lawyer and Melbourne alumna **Jenny Taing** is leading efforts to help disadvantaged students. Her story is on page 17.

Our cover: Entrepreneurs **Bindi Raja** and **Phil Goebel** are being supported by new Entrepreneurship programs. See pages 6 and 7.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT

I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for this exceptional generosity.

The beginning of 2016 marks a milestone for the University of Melbourne. After launching a major philanthropic initiative three years ago, we have reached our target of \$500 million, two years ahead of schedule. With colleagues I am deeply grateful for the extraordinary generosity shown by more than 20,000 people who have donated to *Believe – the Campaign for the University of Melbourne*.

This generosity will help the University raise standards ever higher in each of the critical areas of its work – learning and teaching, research, and engagement with all our communities.

We now have a new goal in sight – one that will extend our commitment to life-changing research and provide more opportunities to allow students from all backgrounds to reach their potential.

This future vision includes an important role for donors and alumni, on such fronts as volunteering, engagement and mentoring our students. We aim to enrich and strengthen these community connections, as we become an ever better university.

In 2015, the University of Melbourne cemented its place at 44 in the Academic Ranking of World Universities and 33 in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings. This strengthening international reputation reflects the University’s commitment to an ever more engaging student culture, improved services and facilities for students and staff and a growing reputation for world-class research.

Philanthropically, highlights of 2015 include a major commitment from Jane Hansen and Paul Little AO and the Hansen Trust that will transform the teaching of history in our Faculty of Arts; the Bertalli Chair in Cancer Medicine at the new Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre; the Clifford Chair in Neural Engineering, which supports collaborative health research; and the Elizabeth and James Tatoulis Chair in Classics, which brings new emphasis to one of the University’s oldest academic disciplines.

“I hope the stories in these pages highlight for you the power and impact of the contribution our work together makes.”



Many challenges lie ahead for the University, as for every higher education institution today. Yet I hope the stories in these pages will highlight for you the power and impact of the contribution our work together makes. In learning, teaching, research and engagement, this work is increasingly empowered by support of donors, including the many who gave in 2015.

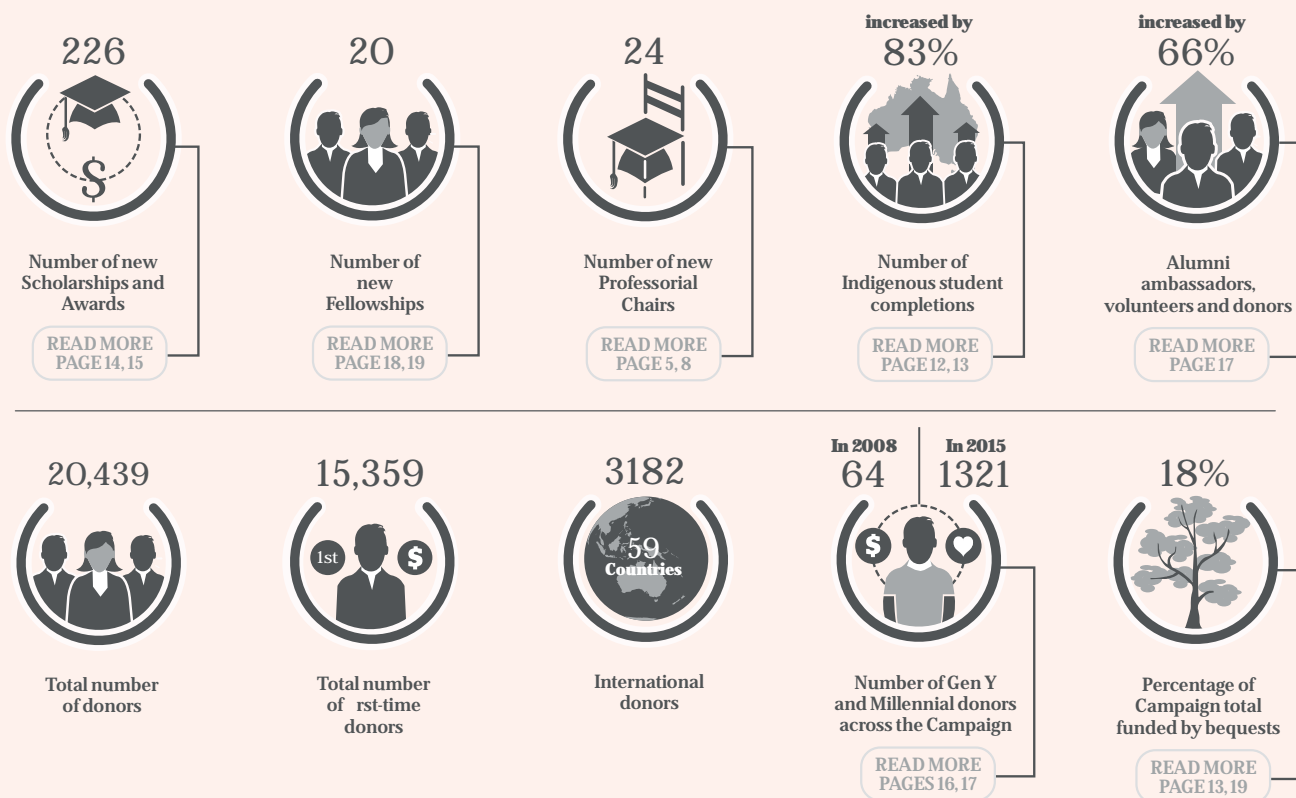
On behalf of the University, my thanks to each of you.

GLYN DAVIS AC
VICE-CHANCELLOR

A WORLDWIDE COMMUNITY OF SUPPORTERS

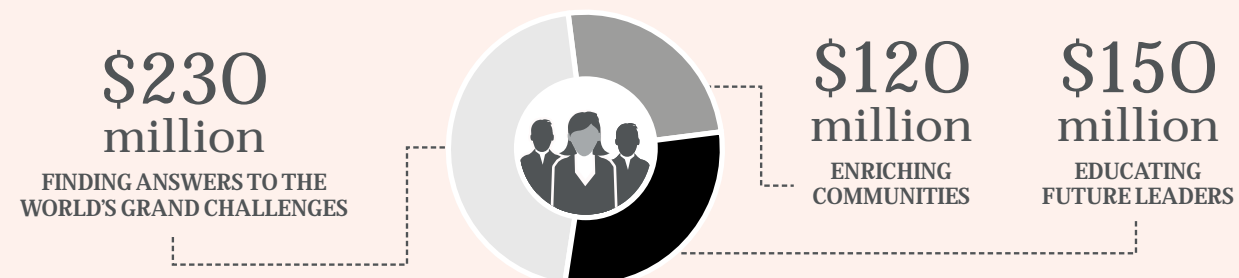
Thanks to more than 20,000 donors worldwide, *Believe — the Campaign for the University of Melbourne* has reached its \$500 million target two years ahead of schedule. The impact of this incredible generosity is already being felt across the University, in affiliated colleges and institutions, and beyond. The transformative effects can be seen in the outcomes achieved by students, new research discoveries and thriving communities. Thank you!

CAMPAIGN IN NUMBERS 2008-2015*



* These figures show donations to main University funds and do not include gifts to affiliated colleges or institutions.

WHAT YOU SUPPORTED**



** Total campaign funds include more than \$72,000,000 given to affiliated colleges and institutions.

CAMPAIGN PROFESSORIAL CHAIRS

Apex Australia Foundation Chair in Developmental Medicine

Transforming the health of children with disabilities

Bertalli Chair in Cancer Medicine

Leading the fight against one of society's biggest killers



Boisbouvier Founding Chair in Australian Literature

Promoting Australia's rich literary traditions and talent

Chair in Cattle and Sheep Production Medicine

Improving animal health and welfare for productive, sustainable farming



Clifford Chair in Neural Engineering

Combining science and engineering to drive advances in health

Cripps Foundation Chair of Cultural Materials Conservation

Conserving art for future generations



Elizabeth and James Tatoulis Chair of Classics

Promoting the ancient cultures that shaped our modern world

Financial Markets Foundation Chair of Developmental Mental Health

Improving the health and wellbeing of children vulnerable to mental illness

Francine V McNi Chair in Human Rights

Advancing our understanding of the law to promote dignity and equality for all



Francine V McNi Chair in Criminology

Exploring criminal behaviour and its impact on lives

Geo and Helen Handbury Chair in Adolescent Health

Improving the health of young people across the globe

Gerry Higgins Chair in Positive Psychology

Equipping young people with the skills and resilience to thrive

Graeme Clark Chair in Audiology and Speech Science

Pursuing biomedical, technological and educational advances in hearing and speech



Hansen Chair in History

Learning from the past to create a better future

Harold Mitchell Chair of Indigenous Eye Health

Eradicating trachoma from Australia

Hugh Ramsay Chair in Australian Art History

Increasing understanding of our nation's artistic heritage



Jack Brockhoff Chair of Child Public Health

Promoting healthy and fulfilling lives for all children

James Riady Chair in Asian Business and Economics

Deepening our understanding of Australia's place in the Asian economy



Jigsaw Foundation Chair of Paediatric Plastic and Maxillofacial Surgery

Changing the lives of children with congenital deformities

Lorenzo Galli Chair in Melanoma and Skin Cancers

Revolutionising the treatment of skin cancers

Lorenzo and Pamela Galli Chair in Developmental Medicine

Leading research into the causes and treatment of childhood disability

Sheila Handbury Chair of Maternal Fetal Medicine

Ensuring mothers and their unborn babies stay healthy

Thomas Baker Chair in Physical Biosciences

Developing and applying quantum technology to biological problems



Thomas H Laby Chair of Physics

Pushing the boundaries of research and teaching in physics

ENTREPRENEURS

Creative thinkers with exciting ideas are getting a boost from new entrepreneurship programs.

IT BEGINS WITH AN IDEA, AND IN BINDI RAJA'S CASE, A VERY BIG IDEA.

Bindi Raja's vision is to create a self-sustaining social enterprise that acts as a pathway for under-privileged young women and girls in India to take control of their lives through education and work. By facilitating education and training, her nascent enterprise would enable girls and young women to work their way out of poverty and create new lives for themselves.

Ms Raja was born in the UK and came to Australia as a six-year-old, but has visited India many times to see relatives and attend family milestones such as weddings.

That has enabled her to build a network including the Global Vaddo Charitable Trust (GVC), which provides education for underprivileged children in Goa, and with schools with international affiliations.

When she describes the work of the trust, Ms Raja's passion is palpable. "I was in India a year-and-a-half ago and at that time it brought home the huge prevalence of poverty.

"That wasn't news, but I felt a sense of hurt and of passion to do something. GVC has been able to take children out of that cycle and begin to educate them. I found that so inspiring, and it motivated me to further my passion and cause."

Ms Raja works as a sonographer and sees the medical field as a powerful pathway for Indian women to find employment and to contribute to their own communities. She is supported by the Naomi Milgrom Scholarship while undertaking the Master of Entrepreneurship through the Wade Institute at Ormond College.

"I want to affiliate with various organisations in India to provide women with the same educational services as Australia. I strongly believe that the medical industry has the capacity to provide an array of opportunities to enable women in India to empower themselves.

"It's about creating a career path for girls and women regardless of their place in their society and their financial or educational background.

"I believe the Masters will provide a level of knowledge and support for my enterprise and will further my focus on structure and business to ensure the greatest chance of success. The scholarship has given me the opportunity, but also the belief that I can make it happen and I am eager to start this incredible journey."

THRILL OF A BIG IDEA



Making a difference:
Bindi Raja and
Phil Goebel.

PHYSIOTHERAPIST PHIL GOEBEL'S PROJECT ALSO BEGAN WITH A FLASH OF INSPIRATION.

The spark that led Phil Goebel to the Melbourne Accelerator Program (MAP) came as he was trying to advise a young woman, who had suffered a partial spinal cord injury in a horse-riding accident, how to prepare to live the rest of her life. His insight led to the development of a walking frame that can prevent catastrophic falls among the elderly.

"She was at the point where she needed to make decisions about what kind of impact this is going to have on her career: Do I need to buy a \$20,000 powered wheelchair? What sort of home modifications will I need?" he recalls. "It was hard to advise her. That's when I realised having the ability to record gait would be really useful to answer these questions."

His insight was that it would be best to gather information about gait passively and regularly. The result, reached with the support of MAP, is a "smart" walking frame equipped with sensors to note walking patterns in real time. MAP offers a range of workshops, programs and events for entrepreneurs at all stages of development, through a scheme of fellowships including office space, mentoring and \$20,000 funding.

Mr Goebel says that once widely deployed, the walking frame could create a database that would enable clinicians to understand how fully an individual, such as the young woman who inspired his idea, might recover over time.

The more immediate application, however, is to reveal changes in gait that are likely to precede a fall among people in aged care. "Falls are a lagging indicator that something is going wrong that can result in a hip fracture," he says. The walking frame, which employs technology from the robotics industry, is a leading indicator enabling clinical interventions before an injury occurs.

Its advantage is that it gathers information continuously while the frame is used, with no need for its user to change their behaviour. A prototype, called the Footprints walking frame, has already been field tested by Mr Goebel's start-up Quanticare.

"The way start-ups are, we are by nature pretty tenacious," says Mr Goebel. "I think the effect of MAP has been to accelerate the process and save me from a lot of mistakes that would have slowed things down." Networking and pitch coaching had also been helpful. "MAP was the first external validation we got on this idea. They have been helping us right from the start."

The Wade Institute at Ormond College, home to the new Master of Entrepreneurship, was established through the generosity of entrepreneur Peter Wade.

The Wade Institute and the Melbourne Accelerator Program have received philanthropic support from many donors interested in supporting entrepreneurship and innovation.

NEW PATHS TO SUCCESS

Bringing
disciplines together:
Professor Stan Skafidas
and Associate Professor
Mirella Dottori.

ENGINEERING

Researchers are using neural engineering to tackle conditions such as autism and epilepsy.

CENTRE FOR NEURAL ENGINEERING

One very human problem, but with multiple paths to a solution being sought under one roof.

That is the driving concept of the University of Melbourne's Centre for Neural Engineering. Supported by a generous donation from Qantas Chairman Leigh Clifford AO — an engineering alumnus — and his family, the centre sprang from the realisation that if different disciplines and their disparate skills were brought together, progress in understanding the brain would come faster.

Six laboratories utilise the ideas and skills of multiple disciplines to investigate the causes, and possible solutions, for conditions such as autism spectrum disorder, epilepsy and schizophrenia.

The centre's Integrative Biological Psychiatry Laboratory is seeking to understand the underlying causes of these disorders from a biological perspective. "Next of kin of patients have kindly donated real brains or brain tissue for study, or in the case of epilepsy, we have access to real patients," says the centre's director, Professor Stan Skafidas. Those working with post-mortem brain material are creating new imaging techniques to see how the neurons and synapses are different in sufferers of the disorders.

Meanwhile, the centre's Stem Cells and Disease Models Laboratory is reprogramming skin cells into stem cells to study the same disorders, along with the actual background genetic make-up of sufferers, creating what is colloquially called a "brain in a dish" — a lentil-sized collection of cells with the same brain patterning as the individual from whom the skin cell was taken.

One problem, two laboratories using different methods to seek an answer.

Professor Skafidas is the inaugural holder of the Clifford Chair at the centre. Its other laboratories involve bionics, computational biology, computational neurobiology and sensors and imaging.

The centre's focus is human health. Much is being done to develop new sensors for implantation in the body, including devising sensors from "bio-resolvable materials" that break down once their work is done. Professor Skafidas explains how the team is working with neurosurgeons at Royal Melbourne Hospital to come up with sensors — post-operation — that monitor the response of the tumour to treatment.

"Your phone can talk daily to the sensor and transmit that

information to the clinician. You can see if the pH or the oxygen content in the vicinity of the tumour is changing, or how the tumour is responding to chemotherapy or it's not."

Patients will learn the outcome of their treatment sooner, while clinicians will gain a powerful research tool. "There's been a one-shot element to brain surgery because it is so fraught with risk, so being able to get that information is invaluable," he says.

"And the best thing is, the sensor disappears. That's a flavour of where engineering meets medicine."

Also under development is an improved bionic ear delivering higher fidelity than existing cochlear implants, and sensors which,

set in the brain of someone with epilepsy, can detect an imminent seizure and apply a stimulus to prevent it.

Professor Skafidas says the Clifford family donation is critical, enabling the researchers to go down paths not well trodden. "It allows us to pursue a long-term strategy that, if it's right, will lead to a major breakthrough."

"The Clifford family donation allows us to pursue a long-term strategy that, if it's right, will lead to a major breakthrough."

As leader of the centre's stem cell laboratory, Associate Professor Mirella Dottori is working towards just such a breakthrough in treatment of the genetic disorder Friedreich's ataxia, which causes progressive damage to the nervous system. Ataxia is documented as affecting one in 30,000 people, but Dr Dottori believes its actual incidence is much higher. Its cause is a mutation that results in low levels of the frataxin protein which maintains iron levels within the body's cells.

"Their very low levels of this frataxin protein causes iron toxicity, the consequences of which are seen in the nervous system and in the heart, which is what eventually kills the patient," Dr Dottori says. "The effect on the nervous system gives them ataxia, they lose balance and end up being in a wheelchair. Their cognitive function is fine but movement and balance is affected."

The team has been collaborating with other Australian researchers and a US company, with positive results in lifting frataxin levels in nerve cells and heart cells. The team's work in testing the compounds in more cell types is critical to whether the compounds proceed to clinical trials. "Patients only need a little more of this frataxin protein to have a very significant impact. It's a disease where small steps can have a big impact."

THE ROAR OF THE GREASEPAINT

ARTS
Generous support from donors is transforming the Southbank Arts precinct.

Music Theatre students perform *A Little Touch of Chaos*.
PHOTO: DREW ECHBERG

The arts world is familiar with making do — creators are used to the proverbial smell of the oily rag. So what happens, then, when the facilities and support are made available?
“It brings us to the next level,” says Dr Tim Edwards, Teaching Workshop Manager at the Victorian College of the Arts.

The remarkable 2015 transformation of a basic industrial workshop into a cutting-edge research facility has, in its first year alone, enabled collaboration between 700 students from visual arts, production, and film and television. “We have had many ‘magic’ moments of cross-discipline and collaboration between our students and staff with visiting artists and groups,” Dr Edwards says.

The new workshop is part of an overall redevelopment of the Southbank campus, made possible through joint funding by The Ian Potter Foundation, The Myer Foundation, Martyn Myer AO and Louise Myer, the University and the State Government. In 2016, another major transformation begins as the Police Stables are converted into an innovative, multipurpose space for visual arts students.

The redevelopment enhances opportunities for students and academics, and also enables collaborations with the wider community.

Secondary schools, the Melbourne International Arts Festival and Indigenous artists from the Northern Territory, among other organisations and groups, have recently used the Teaching Workshop. Music festivals including the Sugar Mountain Festival and the Melbourne Music Week also regularly use the Southbank campus.

In 2014, early in the Southbank renovations, the Grant Street Theatre was revamped into one of Melbourne’s premier music theatre venues. By day, the theatre is a multi-purpose teaching and rehearsal venue, and an exceptional black-box performance space by night.

New lighting equipment and retractable seats mean the theatre can be transformed from a teaching area into a performance space in under an hour.

Grant Street Theatre offers an additional venue for special evening performances: Lionel’s Lounge, which was named to commemorate the support of the Lionel Gell Foundation, showcases jazz and cabaret concerts by students and teachers.

“The Grant Street transformation has given us a home,” says Margot Fenley, the VCA’s Head of Music Theatre. It is home to the annual graduating Showcase, the most important performance for the students over their three years of study, launching them into their professions.

Grant Street can be used for most performing arts activities and has hosted public master classes and special performances by visiting artists. Earlier this year, Fern Sloan and Ted Pugh from the Actor’s Ensemble in New York offered public performances while visiting the VCA for a master teaching week. The renovations make it a drawcard for artists and the local community alike.



PHOTO: PRUDENCE UPTON

For the University of Melbourne Orchestra, the support of the Sidney Myer Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Trust has meant being able to take its music to the community, staging several free concerts a year.

Last October, in a first from the orchestra, it performed in Sydney at the City Recital Hall. Within hours of the tickets being made available, the seats were fully booked.

“It’s a terrific testament to the reputation of the University and the quality of the Orchestra that the concert attracted so much interest,” says James Hutchinson, Program Manager — Music, Faculty of the VCA and MCM.

Mr Hutchinson says the funding is making a real difference. Support from the Trust has enabled the Orchestra to showcase its emerging talent and attract high quality artists to hone student skills, including conductors Hansjörg Schellenberger, one-time principal oboist at the Berlin Philharmonic, and Benjamin Northey, a University of Melbourne alumnus.



CLOAK OF MANY MAKERS

Tiriki Onus in his possum skin cloak: "It turned into a journey that's a lot bigger than me."

INDIGENOUS

Ancient skills are being reborn, and a career in the law has been launched, thanks to support for Indigenous programs.

TIRIKI ONUS POSSUM SKIN CLOAK

The jaw bone of a possum; the leg bone of a kangaroo; the sinews extracted from the tail of an Eastern Grey Kangaroo; with such traditional tools and materials Tiriki Onus has learned to craft possum skin cloaks as generations did before him.

The jaw bone is used to inscribe the inner pelt with depictions of culture and country; the leg bone as an awl to punch holes for the sinews which will ultimately stitch many skins into one cloak.

Mr Onus, inaugural recipient of the Hutchinson Indigenous Fellowship 2015, learned of the importance of the cloaks from his father, "Lin", and grandfather, Bill. The Yorta Yorta man's pursuit of the skills needed to craft a cloak in the traditional manner was an odyssey into culture and identity.

Once, everyone received a cloak at birth, with skins added through their life. "Once it was a skill everyone had, but as we were moved off our land those skills were lost," Mr Onus says.

He gathered stories of different techniques. He learned of ochre inscriptions made fast with emu fat. He tracked down a game meat supplier for possum skins and experimented with methods of stretching and preparing them. He learned the skill of extracting the soft, silken tail sinews – "like heavy-gauge fishing line" – with his own wooden tools before splitting them into fine threads for sewing.

His fellowship included an open workshop in September at the Wilin Centre, where his skills were applied and shared in stitching the first traditionally made cloak in many years, which Mr Onus donated to the centre.

"I was bequeathed a great amount of knowledge from my father and from his father and now I have been able to bring it to another level for myself and others," he says.

"It started out with me wanting a possum skin cloak, but it turned into a journey that's a lot bigger than me. It's incredibly exciting that I have been part of that ongoing journey, how the tradition of those cloaks is not lost."

The Hutchinson Indigenous Fellowship enabled his community research, his experimentation with tools and materials, and the workshop. Among the beneficiaries of his recovery of ancient skills is his daughter, Ninda, born during his fellowship and gifted her own possum skin cloak.

"As far as I know, Ninda is the first person in our family to be born with her own possum skin cloak in seven generations."

MATT FERRARI LEGAL ASSISTANCE

On a bad day, Matt Ferrari, newly graduated from Melbourne Law School, will think of himself as inhabiting the body of a 70-year-old.

"It's really interesting being in the body of somebody who is like a retiree when I am just trying to enter the workforce," Mr Ferrari, 30, says as he prepares for an interview with a prominent city firm.

Mr Ferrari has the rare genetic condition Marfan syndrome, which affects the body's connective tissue and occurs in one in 5000 people. It is the condition that has long been thought to have troubled US president Abraham Lincoln.

"I have a very low tolerance for physical activity," Mr Ferrari says. "I can't stand for long periods. I can't do anything where I have to stand up at all. My joints are constantly dislocating. I have arthritis."

His physical constraints meant it was difficult for him to find work to support himself during his studies: for example sales jobs, which he enjoys, demand too much time on foot.

Matt Ferrari was one of the inaugural recipients of a Harold Mackrell Indigenous Student Scholarship, which enabled him to continue studying without disruption.

The alternative would have been to take time off from his studies to build a reserve of money so that he could complete his degree.

Mr Ferrari credits the scholarship with helping him to achieve his best possible academic results: "The benefit of the scholarship is that it's allowed me to maintain an acceptable standard of living while studying. It has allowed me to focus 100 per cent on my studies."

He is now preparing for a legal career with a particular interest in social issues and issues of disadvantage, and is drawn to family law.

"As a society we are really starting to look seriously at family violence for the first time. It's heartening to see things begin to change now, but it's something that can only be addressed on the front line. I hope as a family lawyer to fight on behalf of disadvantaged women."



The Hutchinson Indigenous Fellowship was established with a \$1 million endowment from the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, and was named after Darvell Hutchinson AM upon his retirement after 50 years with the Trust.

The Harold Mackrell Indigenous Student Scholarship was established through the bequest of Harold Mackrell, a long-time campaigner for social justice.

Born with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, Savant Thakur is working on ways to improve the quality of life for people with the debilitating condition.

GIVING IT BACK



SCHOLARSHIPS

In medical research and education, scholarship recipients are already contributing to the community in inspiring ways.

SAVANT THAKUR RESEARCHER

In the countless hours he spent at the Royal Children's Hospital as a patient, Savant Thakur would watch the doctors and researchers go about their work. His GP had sent him for tests when he was four, concerned about the way the boy was walking, and regular falls. Mr Thakur was diagnosed with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, or DMD, a disorder that progressively wastes the body's muscle tissue, affecting one in 3500 boys.

In those long days at the Children's, an ambition began to form. "With all the exposure at that age, I felt like I wanted to do something, contribute in some way," he says.

Mr Thakur, now 24, is working to find a cure for the very disorder that has confined him to a wheelchair since he was 10, and which at times makes it hard for him to breathe without assistance.

The focus of his PhD research at the Basic and Clinical Myology Laboratory, within the Department of Physiology, is how to enhance muscle regeneration in people with DMD and other muscle-wasting conditions. Experiments are conducted under his supervision by a research assistant.

Mr Thakur explains that with DMD, muscle degenerates and regenerates in a continuous cycle. But at some stage, the muscle will lose its ability to regenerate.

Mr Thakur was the recipient of the R D Wright Studentship in 2013-14, and he also received the bequest-funded Frances Elizabeth Thomson Scholarship in 2014 (awarded to the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences' highest-ranked students engaged in the Honours Program) when he did Honours in Biomedicine prior to commencing his PhD last year.

The studentship and scholarships he has been awarded since he started studying at the University in 2010 have allowed Mr Thakur to pursue his studies.

"Because of my condition, I can't work part-time and there is a lot of pressure because of ever-increasing living expenses," Mr Thakur says. "By getting the scholarship, I can focus solely on my studies without having to worry about all the other issues."

He also says he can't imagine doing his research without the support of the University's Disability Liaison Unit.

Mr Thakur shies away from being described as inspirational. "I don't see it that way," he says. "I just see myself as trying to contribute, to improve the lives of others who have got the condition."

EVE BATCHELDER TEACHER

Standing before her class on the first day of school, newly minted teacher Eve Batchelder is understandably both nervous and excited. Her school placements as a Master of Teaching student have helped her prepare, but this is the real thing.

The nerves soon dissipate. "The best part was getting to know the students," Ms Batchelder recalls. "In my head I was – and am – anxious about doing this job well, but on my feet it makes a lot more sense."

That should come as no surprise — there has been a growing realisation that teaching is her calling.

During her undergrad years at Sydney's Macquarie University, she enjoyed working as a tutor. On graduation, she took a year off and headed to Siberia where she home schooled an English family's daughter. They were in Novosibirsk, where temperatures can drop to minus 40



degrees. "It was probably the best year and the hardest year of my life so far," she says.

Beyond the culture shock, it was a further realisation that education was for her. Ms Batchelder has a strong motivation to help others and had been considering social work. Teaching was a way to combine both.

So she headed to the University of Melbourne and a Master of Teaching. She was awarded a Future Generations Scholarship, established by many donations to the Annual Appeal to help graduate students meet their costs. "It just took away that financial pressure so I could focus on my study and not have that extra stress or burden."

It placed her in good stead for the challenges she'll face. Ms Batchelder has an ambition to work with children and families who are experiencing social disadvantage – "taking the best to the least".

Her first teaching job is at a school that is part of a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre, in north-eastern NSW.

"I love teaching and that's why I chose it," she says. "But it's also a way that I can serve others."

The R D Wright Studentship was established through generous gifts from the Melbourne medical community to enable undergraduates to undertake research in the University's Department of Physiology during the summer vacation.

STUDENT APPEAL

Stephanie Lin has been both a recipient and donor of the Student Appeal, which helps students struggling financially.

STEPHANIE LIN

Magic happens. For University of Melbourne commerce alumna Stephanie Lin, that’s not a New Age slogan but the essence – and the two-way reward – of the University’s Student Appeal.

Ms Lin, now working as a consultant at Deloitte Touche

Tohmatsu – fittingly, in the area of human capital – has been a recipient, a raiser of funds and awareness, a committee member and a donor for the Student Appeal, the magic of which she sums up in another perfectly economical phrase: students for students.

The Student Appeal, she explains, is a student-led fundraising effort that aims to help other students on campus who are financially struggling and to raise awareness among the student body of the University’s wider need for philanthropic support.

Most students face a constant challenge balancing study with part-time work to keep pace with rent and living expenses. “Everyone jokes about things like Cheap Tuesdays: ‘let’s go get a cheap pizza,’” says Ms Lin. “It’s ‘uni student lifestyle’, and no one takes it seriously.”

But for some students the balance becomes difficult and tips into financial stress, which seriously impacts a student’s wellbeing, studies and ability to live a normal life.

Becoming involved in the Student Appeal as a volunteer in 2010 opened Ms Lin’s eyes to this reality. “We heard stories of students who basically lived couch to couch – technically they are homeless,” she says.

In extreme cases, such financial hardship can lead to students abandoning studies altogether. The Student Appeal – directly supporting those in need – can be a lifeline.

“I was surprised at the need when I first got involved – hundreds and hundreds of applications,” Ms Lin says. Last year, 1963 students applied for financial aid. Only 439 were able to receive a grant.

The impact and reach of the Student Appeal is growing. First held in 2006, the Student Appeal has raised more than \$95,000 to help students and has received donations from over 4000 members of the University community – students, staff, alumni and friends. In 2015, the Student Appeal reached a significant milestone of over 1000 student donors, a 47 per cent increase from 2014.



Ms Lin, the daughter of Chinese immigrants, is the first in her family to go to university. Raised in Adelaide, she shifted to Melbourne to study for a Bachelor of Commerce in accounting and finance in 2009. For the first year she lived at Trinity College and says she initially “existed in my own little bubble” in the college community.

But moving out the following year, she went looking for an extra-curricular activity with meaning and found the Student Appeal. “Which, six years later, I’m still passionate about.”

Initially Ms Lin became one of the Appeal’s white T-shirted volunteers, but was also a recipient of its financial assistance, via a housing grant from Student Financial Aid. Housing grants are a specific focus of the Student Appeal.

Soon she found herself on the committee, organising the volunteers who go out and engage with fellow students, as well as awareness and fund raising events such as sleep-outs on the South Lawn, sumo wrestling afternoons and jumping castles. “Essentially it was about encouraging students to donate and beginning a conversation about the need,” she says.

Ms Lin was awarded a Commerce Alumni Leadership Scholarship in her final year, recognising her service to the University community, and also became chair of the Young Alumni Council for the Faculty of Business and Economics.

She has remained a donor, making a monthly contribution to the First In The Family scholarships. “I’m not donating massive amounts,” she says, “but it’s the small things that count.”

That, she says, is the added benefit of the Student Appeal – inspiring an awareness and interest in philanthropy among the next generation. “I think in Australia our sense of philanthropy for higher education is that it’s not the norm as it is overseas. It’s a sense of pride, I think. You leave the University but you give back and you make a contribution.

“I suppose that’s what it is – it’s about leaving a legacy behind. At the end of the day you hope to sprinkle a bit of magic.”

VOLUNTEERS

Jenny Taing is giving back to the University that gave her opportunities, while Ashwyn Perera is mentoring young students.

JENNY TAING

Jenny Taing remembers sitting in the emergency department of the Royal Eye and Ear Hospital. Her mother had an inflamed eye, and she had taken her in for treatment.

The situation, which demanded a four-night stay, was confronting enough. A further layer of complication was that her mother, a Vietnamese refugee, did not speak English.

That experience in the emergency ward was a pivotal moment for Ms Taing, who decided that the best way to improve a situation was to get involved.

In 2012, the University of Melbourne law graduate and senior lawyer at ASIC joined the Eye and Ear Hospital’s board – at 29, the youngest-ever director.

Her attitude of getting involved and making a difference is now bringing benefits to the University and its students.

“There was a time when I thought it’s time to give back to the University,” says Ms Taing. “The University has given me so many opportunities in life. Tertiary education has really been empowering for me and has been an opportunity for me

to have a platform to speak, and to have a voice.”

Ms Taing is a deputy president of the Alumni Council and chairs the Alumni Council Giving working group, which has a focus on engaging alumni and encouraging new participation in giving. In 2015 the working group launched an initiative aimed at raising funds for students suffering financial

disadvantage. It was peer-to-peer – Ms Taing, for example, wrote to former students from her time at the University.

And while the University benefits from very significant gifts, the focus was on the impact of smaller gifts: a donation of \$10 would pay for a student’s telephone and internet costs during the busy exam period, \$30 for a week’s transport, and \$50 for a critical course textbook.

As a result of this initiative, alumni who feel passionate about supporting students have contributed \$27,000 – benefiting hundreds of student who seek assistance each year.



ASHWYN PERERA

Ashwyn Perera looks back appreciatively at the assistance from the University’s lecturers and department heads while studying for his Bachelor of Science and Diploma of Languages (German).

By his second year, he had casual work in a laboratory, thanks to a lecturer who suggested he apply. That led to him getting a research paper published when he was just 21.

Mr Perera also credits that experience for helping secure his current position as a research assistant in multiple sclerosis research at the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health.

Having benefited from the advice and experience of others, Mr Perera, now 24, has embraced the role of mentor, taking part in the University’s Melbourne Welcome and Access Connections Mentoring Programs.

One mentee has been Ariel Simon, who grew up in a commune in Byron Bay and has had to adjust to university life as he studies a Bachelor of Science with a major in neuroscience.

Mr Perera became Ariel’s mentor through the Access Connections Mentoring Program. In their first meeting, the mentee explained that he was coming to terms with studying in the university context, but since then his grades have improved steadily.

Mr Perera also made a list of opportunities that Ariel could explore – similar to the advice the mentor received from his lecturers. They meet twice a month.

And the potential benefits of the relationship extend well beyond university life. The Access Connections Mentoring Program aims to provide insights into the professional world for students in their desired field. “By talking to Ariel, I’ve been able to expand his knowledge of the career options and strategies after study,” he says.

Mr Perera likes to see his involvement as giving back, recognising the benefits of his own background. “I need to respect the fact that I’m in this position by providing this opportunity to others.”





GAME ON: WILD MEAT ON THE MENU

Dr Catie Gressier is researching the values, practices and beliefs surrounding the consumption of native and feral meats.

FELLOWSHIPS

Two researchers demonstrate the diverse range of research made possible by McArthur Fellowships. One is looking into attitudes to wild meats; the other, race relations.

CATIE GRESSIER WILD MEAT

On a weekday afternoon, Dr Catie Gressier is standing at a stall amid the hum and buzz of Melbourne's Preston Market. The anthropologist's fieldwork has taken her to remote and exotic parts of the world. While this suburban location may be more familiar, her fieldwork here is just as fascinating. Dr Gressier is observing the stall owner selling wild meat – in this case, a whole deer. As a cultural anthropologist, she is researching the values, practices and beliefs surrounding our consumption – or avoidance – of native and feral meats.

The support she receives as the Thomas and Ruth McArthur Fellow allows her to investigate the stigma attached to wild meats, such as deer, kangaroo and rabbit. Her work is looking at this reluctance to embrace it, despite compelling reasons to do so.

With the world's population projected to reach around 9.5 billion by 2050, it will also mean an ever-increasing appetite. "There's just no way we can reconcile that amount of meat with our current production methods," Dr Gressier says. "We ultimately need to start looking at eating less meat, but the intermediary is looking at alternatives."

Dr Gressier sees herself in traditional anthropologist territory, looking at broad aspects of society through the lens of food.

She embarked on the path to anthropology when she travelled to Namibia in southern Africa, where her mother was doing volunteer work. She fell in love with the continent.

Her PhD at the University of Western Australia researched emplacement and senses of belonging among the white citizens of the Okavango Delta, Botswana. But despite an impressive career, Dr Gressier was almost lost to anthropology. Unable to secure ongoing work, she was about to take a job in university administration. Then came the McArthur Fellowship.

"I got the phone call and was just ecstatic," she says. "It is such a unique opportunity. Most junior scholars are swamped with teaching, so this fellowship is hugely coveted because it allows you to consolidate your PhD research, while also establishing a new area of focus."

"Particularly for early career women who want to have a family, a research-only fellowship gives you the edge to keep competitive in a pretty tough environment. I'm not exaggerating when I say I feel blessed every day in my role."

CAMEO DALLEY RACE RELATIONS

As every researcher knows, support – both financial and moral – is the lifeblood of their existence. For anthropologist Dr Cameo Dalley, that began with her grandmother and is continuing today through the McArthur Fellowship.

When she was undergraduate volunteering at the Queensland Museum, Dr Dalley came across a collection of Aboriginal artefacts bearing her grandmother's name, Mary Dalley (nee Leake).

Dr Dalley knew her grandmother had lived and worked in western Queensland. What she didn't know was that she had collected artefacts and sent them to the museum.

That interest also extended to helping support her granddaughter's eventual career. When as an undergraduate Dr Dalley was about to embark on a field trip, her grandmother gave her \$600.

Her doctoral research took her to Mornington Island in the Gulf of Carpentaria, where she lived for almost 18 months. Again, the help of others was vital. One morning, there was a knock at her door. "Are you the anthropologist?" the tall, elderly Aboriginal man asked. "Have you got your book? All right, let's go."

After completing her PhD, Dr Dalley self-funded visits to the remote east Kimberley region of Western Australia. She wanted to examine local race relations, particularly in light of the proposed closure of Aboriginal communities.

Lately, the help has come in the form of the Thomas and Margaret Ruth McArthur Fellowship. "It's such an amazing opportunity," she says. One that, in turn, will help with an appreciation of a momentous change in the communities.

The Thomas and Margaret Ruth McArthur Fellowships were established through the bequest of Dr Annie Margaret McArthur Oliver, a distinguished anthropologist and University alumna.

SCIENCE

Laby Fellow Jacinta den Besten is helping women to believe in themselves and succeed in science.

Jacinta den Besten's favourite conversation comes after students in the Telescopes in Schools program have first explored the night skies with a 12-inch LX200-ACF Meade telescope. In particular, it is the reaction of the girls in the class that both delights and encourages her.

"The program has made me realise I can actually do these things," girls will tell her. "I can work with complicated scientific equipment and I never thought I'd be able to do a job like that."

Ms den Besten is the Laby Teaching and Outreach Fellow, supported by the Laby Foundation, and co-ordinator of the Telescopes in Schools program, which targets schools in disadvantaged areas in the north and west of Melbourne and Victorian regional centres.

Schools get the telescopes for three years, and sign up for at least six sessions a year, attended by staff and students from the University's astrophysics group.

That gender doesn't matter should be self-evident, but as Ms den Besten knows too well, that's not the case. She watches what happens when students are introduced to the telescope. The boys rush in to try it out, while the girls will usually sit back and let the boys go first.

"I don't think that's a reflection on how boys and girls do things," Ms den Besten says. "I think that's a reflection on how we expect them to do things."

Ms den Besten has become a champion for girls and women studying and working in Science,

Technology, Engineering and Mathematics – or STEM. Along with co-ordinating Telescopes in Schools, she also heads the University of Melbourne's Women in Physics, which supports women in physics, advocates for them and works for cultural change to remove impediments to career advancement within the School of Physics and beyond. The group hosts public talks and panels, to which secondary school students are welcomed.

The Laby Foundation also supports Ms den Besten's Women in Physics events. "There's no way I would be here without the Laby Foundation," she says.

"There's no way I would be here without the Laby Foundation."

SKY'S THE LIMIT

Jacinta den Besten: taking University science to students through the Telescopes in Schools program.

The very need for the Women in Physics group speaks loudly about the extent of the problems it is trying to overcome. When Ms den Besten was a physics honours student at the University in 1994, there was a 50:50 gender split – a milestone that made the papers.

Yet almost two decades on, that progress has stalled – and in fact, has gone backwards. When she returned to the University after teaching and taking time off to have children, Ms den Besten found the number of female students studying physics had declined.

Two years ago, she surveyed 200 first-year female physics students at the University, asking why they thought women don't continue with the discipline. Some 30 per cent said it was because males were better at physics than females. More than 50 per cent believed physics was not "for women" or "too hard".

So much for self-perception. She showed the students the grades achieved by females and males. They were exactly the same. "They were just absolutely gobsmacked."

So what is going on? In part, Ms den Besten blames social media and the media in general for perpetuating the myth.

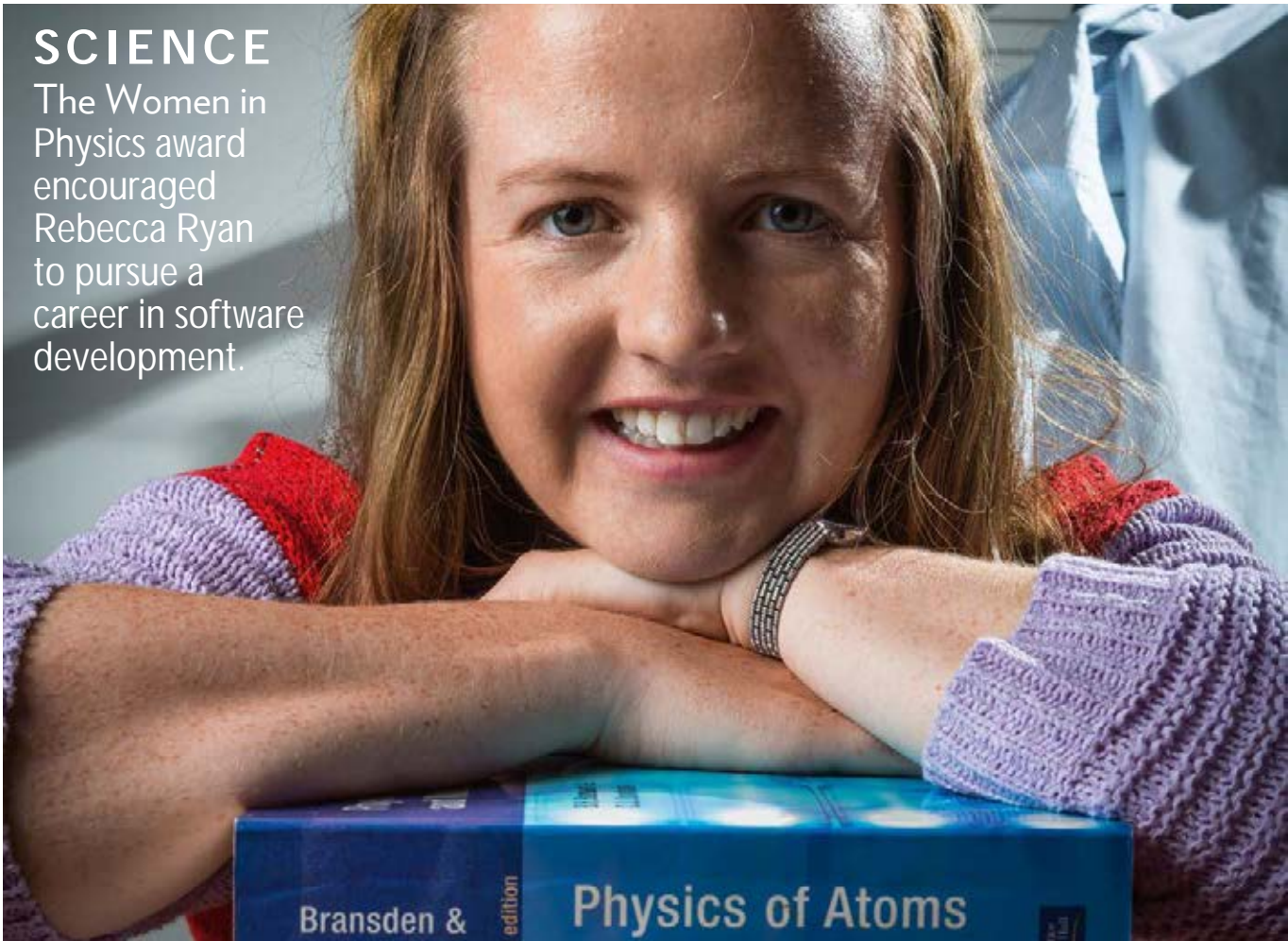
"I think we see those stereotypes more and more," says Ms den Besten. "Women don't do physics, they don't do mathematics."

And parents and teachers are reinforcing it, suggesting girls take the so-called easier route. "We are teaching them as people not to take risks, not to try hard, not to go beyond their expectations and become amazing people."

Ms den Besten adds that by providing opportunities, presenting positive role models and taking University science into schools, girls and parents are seeing what females can achieve in science.

SCIENCE

The Women in Physics award encouraged Rebecca Ryan to pursue a career in software development.



When she was an undergraduate physics student, Rebecca Ryan experienced the familiar struggles and tensions. Pulled in different directions by study and part-time work, she found it hard to perform to her expectations.

Doing honours was a different experience. As she puts it, she was able to “knuckle down” and did “reasonably well” – to the point where seven years ago she received the Women in Physics Award, something she never imagined winning. The award is made annually to a female student enrolled in the first year of a research higher degree in physics — established by alumna Valerie Crohn to encourage female students to pursue higher studies in physics.

“It showed me that, particularly for women who try to go through in STEM fields, there are extra awards and encouragement out there for you because they really want more women to get into the fields,” says Ms Ryan.

Life is often difficult for one of the few females in a field that is predominantly male, Ms Ryan notes, and the award gave her the encouragement to deal with that environment.

Ms Ryan went on to undertake her PhD in the field of optics – coherent refractive imaging. She has travelled extensively overseas for conferences and experiments, and the skills she

developed at Melbourne have shaped her career in maths and science publishing, and software start-ups.

The computer programming skills she developed studying her PhD have enabled her to acquire several computer programming languages, and she can now confidently pick up new languages.

“I just never would have thought of software development as a future career,” says Ms Ryan. “Getting that award, which encouraged me to continue with the PhD and software, has definitely given me a lot of career prospects.”

Other disciplines are also benefiting by gifts that encourage females to pursue study. The Irene Rogers Lowe Scholarship in Agriculture was established in 2013 by Bill Rogers to commemorate his mother Irene Rogers nee Lowe, who was the first female student in the Bachelor of Agricultural Science and the first female student at Dookie.

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