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The University of Queensland recorded an outstanding achievement in October when the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) released its overwhelmingly positive audit report of UQ (see story page 4). The report was issued amid continued uncertainty about proposed Federal Government reforms to the higher education sector.

There are a number of issues which are clouding the drive for change, including the Federal Government’s attempt to tie much needed additional funding for universities to its workplace reform agenda. UQ and many other universities have expressed strong opposition to this proposal.

Another contentious matter in the proposed legislation surrounds governance, with Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training Dr Brendan Nelson in favour of restricting the size of governing councils in future.

It is noteworthy that AUQA panelists specifically commended UQ’s 35-member Senate, describing it as “reflective and engaged”. They also praised the positive relationship which existed between the Senate, University executive and the wider UQ community.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Professor Margaret Gardner’s office is co-ordinating preparation of a plan, indicating the actions the University intends to take in addressing the audit report findings.

The action plan will be submitted with comments from the Academic Board to Senate for approval in December, with onward submission to AUQA early in 2004.

I am confident we have the systems, but more importantly, the people, in place to continue to improve. I would like to thank the dedicated and outstanding staff who continue to contribute to this magnificent effort.

Professor John Hay
Quality appraisal result applauded

UQ has been highly commended after a thorough audit by an independent, national, not-for-profit higher education agency.

The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) has praised UQ for outstanding leadership and excellent quality performance in an audit report released on October 1.

The audit panel agreed the University’s claim in its internal audit that “...UQ has an embedded culture of quality at the institution-wide and individual level”, was a justified claim.

AUQA praised UQ’s self-review – outlined in its 2003 Performance Portfolio – and found its quality processes to be of a very high standard.

The overwhelmingly positive report, based on an audit panel visit from June 1–5 this year, concluded that “...UQ benefits from strong leadership which sets a clear strategic direction that is well-defined, widely-communicated and broadly embraced”.

Vice-Chancellor Professor John Hay said the report was a strong endorsement of the University’s excellent management practices which focused on continuous improvement.

“The report reflects very well on staff, students and graduates who have all contributed magnificently to the culture of excellence at UQ,” he said.

AUQA – which has carried out a number of audits of Australian universities in the past two years – concluded that UQ was monitoring itself effectively on a continuous basis.

The panel, chaired by University of New South Wales Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) Professor Adrian Lee, conducted interviews with more than 300 staff, students and other UQ stakeholders.

The AUQA panelists also commended UQ’s 35-member Senate, describing it as “reflective and engaged” and praising the positive relationship between the Senate, UQ executive and the wider University community.

The report contained 19 commendations which singled out UQ’s outstanding strategic management, teaching and learning processes and strong support for researchers.

“I noted UQ’s excellence in research “...is not achieved at the expense of teaching” and praised UQ’s Teaching and learning enhancement plan as “...a live document, acted upon and regularly updated”.

Significantly, the auditors prefaced its recommendations for action by acknowledging UQ had already identified most areas requiring action.

Recent organisational change at UQ – involving rationalising the number of schools and reorganising faculties – had been handled well, the panel found.

Other key areas of commendation included the following:

- Strategy, planning and management: The report commended UQ’s method of prioritising its budget to support strategic priorities and found UQ’s developed method of operation effective.
- Teaching and learning: UQ’s quality processes for monitoring and enhancing teaching and learning of students was praised as was UQ’s ongoing school review process.
- Research and research training: UQ’s strong support for higher degree students, managed by the Graduate School, and for early-career researchers, was commended.
- International activities: Several aspects of UQ’s international student recruitment activities were commended.

Following the audit, UQ’s method of operation was described as “...thoughtful and extensive strategic direction...” in its 2003 Performance Portfolio.

The report commended UQ’s method of operation effective.

Mr Stumer, who has an outstanding academic record including several Dean’s Commendations for High Achievement, received a University Medal in 2001 for his exceptionally high Grade Point Average (GPA).

The Governor of Queensland Her Excellency Quentin Bryce, AC announced the winner on October 28 at UQ’s St Lucia campus.

The selection committee interviewed six short-listed candidates before choosing Mr Stumer who will join five other state winners and three from Australia-at-Large.

Founded in 1902 under the will of the late Cecil John Rhodes, the scholarships are for an initial two years, with the possibility of a third.

Candidates must be aged between 19 and 25 years and citizens of the country from which they are selected.

Since the scheme began, approximately 500 Rhodes scholars have been selected, with women becoming eligible in 1972.

The qualities set out by the late Cecil Rhodes for those seeking Rhodes scholarships include academic and intellectual excellence; integrity of character; respect for fellow beings; and a capacity for leadership; with sporting prowess an advantage, but not a necessity.
Nation’s leading linkages

UQ remains one of Australia’s top beneficiaries of Federal Government funding allocations for research.

UQ topped the nation’s universities in funding from the first round of Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Projects announced on October 15.

UQ’s Linkage Projects for 2004 are worth $19 million, made up of $8.7 million in ARC funding and $10.3 million in industry partner contributions, ensuring UQ remains one of the nation’s leaders in the Commonwealth Government’s funding allocations, announced by Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training Dr Brendan Nelson.

“It is an outstanding result and UQ is clearly the leader in Linkage Projects around the country,” said Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor David Siddle.

The Linkage Projects program funds collaborative projects between university researchers and partner organisations.

UQ also attracted another $19 million in the ARC Discovery Projects scheme, including two grants worth almost $2 million each.

UQ’s ground-breaking research into scramjet engines, through its HyShot program, was awarded one of the largest-ever ARC grants of $1.8 million over five years (2003–2007). Led by Professor Allan Paull from UQ’s Centre for Hypersonics, and joined by Professor Richard Morgan, Dr David Mee and Dr Tim McIntyre, the funding will go towards furthering research into the field.

In particular, the team will aim to develop an engine that operates at 10 times the speed of sound, which would revolutionise air and space travel.

Professor David Craik from UQ’s Institute for Molecular Bioscience (IMB) and Associate Professor Marilyn Anderson from La Trobe University were awarded $1.75 million to develop the next generation of drug design and insecticides.

Professor Craik is researching the unique structure and function of circular proteins that has exciting prospects to be applied in pharmaceuticals and agriculture.

Circular proteins have no ends, making them exceptionally stable and resistant to enzyme digestion, which is perfect for the development of drugs and insecticides.

UQ also performed well nationally in the three fellowship categories that are integrated into the Discovery grants. It received the second highest number of Australian Research Fellowships (two) and equal-second highest number of Australian Professorial Fellowships (three), and 11 Australian Postdoctoral Fellowships, fourth highest in the country.

UQ also performed well again in the Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities (LIEF) grants with $1.85 million in ARC funding and $2.8 million from its partners to have $4.6 million in total devoted to five large infrastructure projects.

Art exhibition

1962: Scott Redford selected works 1983–1992 will be on display at the University Art Museum until November 22.

“Scott Redford is one of the few artists to have sustained a successful and critically acclaimed national and international practice from Queensland since the 1980s,” said University Art Museum Director Ross Searle.

He said the Brisbane-based artist directly referenced international art styles in his work.

The exhibition focuses on Mr Redford’s well-known black “paintings” and floor pieces, with its title referring to the artist’s birth year of 1962.

The museum is on level five of the Forgan Smith Tower, UQ St Lucia, and is open every Tuesday to Friday from 10am-4pm and on Saturdays from 12-4pm.

UQ Gatton on show

UQ Gatton will have a high profile at Farm and Food Expo 2003 from November 15–16.

UQ Gatton’s Dr Rob Fletcher and Professor Daryl Joyce will give presentations.

The free event will be held from 9am-4pm at St Joseph’s College, Twigg St, Indooroopilly.


Moreton Bay open day

UQ’s Moreton Bay Research Station will hold an open day on November 16 from 10am–3pm.

Events include tours of the station, guided field walks, research talks, display tanks and a sausage sizzle.

The free event will take place on the corner of Flinders Avenue and Fraser Street, Dunwich, North Stradbroke Island.
Cromwell celebrations
Cromwell College will hold a weekend of celebrations marking 50 years of residency in June 2004.

In 1954, Cromwell became the first college to accept residents at UQ St Lucia.

The celebratory weekend will include a dinner dance at the Brisbane Hilton on June 5 and a celebration in the college’s Griffith Memorial Chapel on June 6.

Information: www.uq.edu.au/cromwell

Free IT classes
UQ staff and students can improve their IT skills free via web-based flexible-learning options.

The UQ Library has renewed subscription to the Monash Learning Fast package, which includes interactive tutorials (including tests) in Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, webpage design, Internet search skills and MYOB accounting.

Information: http://askit.uq.edu.au/learningfast

Youth leaders awarded
UQ international students Sheikh Mohammad Rafiqul Hasan and Petra Suhren are two of six inaugural Commonwealth Youth Leadership Award winners.

The awards offer opportunities to postgraduate Australian Development Scholarship holders from eligible Asian and Pacific Commonwealth countries to prepare for leadership roles in their home countries.

Mr Hasan, studying for a Master of Geographical Information Science, and Ms Suhren, completing a Master of Financial Management, said they would use the opportunity to further their careers and create positive changes in their countries.

The awards are a Youth For The Future initiative and are funded by AusAID.

Gecko goes public
A pair of glowing red eyes signalled an important find for a PhD student in North Queensland.

A UQ PhD student has discovered an ancient and remarkable species of leaf-tailed gecko in a remote area north-west of Townsville.

Conrad Hoskin from UQ’s School of Life Sciences has described the new species, known as the Gulbaru gecko (Phyllurus gulbaru) in the Australian Journal of Zoology.

He has already expressed concern for the species and said under current international conservation criteria it warranted an endangered listing.

He said the Gulbaru gecko was a spectacular creature that was prickly and large – about 13cm long.

“Like most geckos, it has no eyelids and has to keep moistening its eyes with its tongue,” he said.

“It is perfectly camouflaged to its rocky environment, with granite-like colourings and is hard to find.

“Unlike most geckos, it has no pads on its skinny fingers, so it cannot climb windows like common household geckos: instead it has sharp claws for climbing rocks.

“Leaf-tailed geckos are so-called because their tails look like flat leaves, but the Gulbaru gecko’s tail is long and cylindrical.”

In 1998, Mr Hoskin discovered a distinct leaf-tailed gecko, the Mt Elliot gecko (Phyllurus amnicola) in a neighbouring area near Townsville.

In 2001, he was with a UQ group checking skink populations and during a nocturnal search to look for geckos, he was confronted by a pair of red eyes glowing in the dark.

It was the Gulbaru gecko, an obviously different species which on genetic examination proved to be more closely related to leaf-tailed geckos from the Mackay area than the Mt Elliot gecko.

Mr Hoskin had previously discovered.

He said only two small sub-populations of the Gulbaru gecko were known to exist, both in rocky rainforest areas surrounded by open eucalypt forests, little of which were protected.

“It is one of the most narrowly restricted reptile species in Queensland,” he said.

“The species is distributed in two sub-populations near Townsville in a total area estimated at less than 14 square kilometres.

“The destruction of habitat by unmanaged burning continues to reduce and further fragment it.”

Mr Hoskin is also describing a new frog and species of reduced-limb lizard from North Queensland.

He said the discoveries were of considerable interest as it was rare to find a new vertebrate species, especially along the populated east coast.

His thesis on rainforest speciation in frogs is being supervised by UQ Associate Professor Hamish McCallum and Professor Craig Moritz at the University of California at Berkeley.

His work has received support including a UQ Graduate School Travel Award, an Australian Postgraduate Award, and funding from the National Science Foundation, Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Rainforest Ecology and Management and the Queensland Museum.
ACHIEVERS ACKNOWLEDGED

UQ Teaching and Learning Week will begin with the announcement of UQ’s 2003 excellence in teaching, research supervision and enhancement of student learning awards.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Professor Margaret Gardner said the awards were designed to recognise, encourage and reward sustained excellence in teaching, supervision of research higher degree candidates, and excellence in the learning environment and provision of student services.

The awards will be announced at a gala ceremony on November 10 at Brisbane’s Customs House.

Five winners will receive $10,000 Awards for Excellence in Teaching, which were established in 1988 and are funded by the University and The Alumni Association of The University of Queensland Inc.

Up to three $10,000 Awards for Excellence in Research Higher Degree Supervision will also be awarded.

Australia’s first official university awards for excellence in research higher degree supervision were established at UQ in 2000 and are an initiative of the UQ Graduate School and the UQ Union.

For the second year, two teams, programs or organisational units will be presented with $20,000 Awards for Enhancement of Student Learning by the University Academic Board.

SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS

Novel teaching methods designed to produce successful graduate outcomes will be under the spotlight at a Teaching and learning excellence showcase from 5.30–7pm on November 13 in the Queensland Bioscience Precinct auditorium, UQ St Lucia.

The free public event will focus on undergraduate teaching initiatives in engineering and science.

Two presentations will demonstrate ultra-modern techniques for imparting in-depth knowledge and specific graduate attributes – and include tips on how high schools, students and parents can prepare for university study.

Caroline Crosthwaite from the School of Engineering will showcase the project-centred approach used to enhance teaching and learning in chemical and environmental engineering.

Students take on realistic projects, often sourced from industry, and work in teams to develop communication and project management skills as well as technical engineering knowledge.

A teaching team from the Faculty of Biological and Chemical Sciences will discuss strategies for developing excitement and a love of science in first-year biological science students.

Awards for Excellence in Research Higher Degree Supervision will also be awarded.

For the second year, two teams, programs or organisational units will be presented with $20,000 Awards for Enhancement of Student Learning by the University Academic Board.

Education in focus

The second annual UQ Teaching and Learning Week from November 10–14 will showcase teaching methods and reward excellence.
Brains teased for good cause

More than 200 trivia buffs from the corporate sector and the University put their reputations on the line in a gala fundraising event last month.

Popular Brisbane television newreader Rod Young had 40 teams of would-be quiz wizards scratching their heads at the UQ Development Office Corporate Brain Tease on October 8.

The tough trivia-question event was one of the major fundraising activities for UQ’s Brain Disease Challenge, and added more than $20,000 in cash and in-kind support to appeal coffers.

The challenge aims to raise funds for much-needed research into brain and nervous system diseases including Alzheimer’s, Cerebral Palsy, Multiple Sclerosis and stroke.

Besides a host of prizes for Brain Tease team members, including meals for two at leading Brisbane eateries, there were also two well-subscribed raffles.

Brisbane Lions coach Leigh Matthews, also a co-chair of the Brain Disease Challenge, donated an autographed team jumper as worn by the three-time Australian Football League premiers.

The second raffle prize, donated by Lexus of Brisbane, was a weekend loan of a luxury vehicle.

The winning team was Quizzical, who scored 52 correct answers from 60 questions after leading the event from the first round.

Development Office Director Margaret Burke said the event attracted widespread support from Brisbane’s corporate sector, as well as from within the University.

“We’ve had such a positive response we will be conducting this fundraising event on an annual basis,” she said.

To make a tax-deductible donation to the challenge, contact Ms Burke.

07 3346 3902
margaret.burke@uq.edu.au

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Queensland is set to become a major training centre for Australia and south-east Asia to address a critical, world-wide shortage of systems engineers.

UQ and the Boeing Company launched a new training laboratory at the University’s St Lucia campus on September 24 as part of a multi-pronged strategy to overcome such shortages.

Students using the Boeing Systems Engineering Teaching Laboratory and enrolling in a Master of Systems Engineering program which begins next year.

They are expected to be in international demand once they graduate.

The program is one of only a few in the country and has a unique emphasis on computer-based systems.

Systems engineers build highly complex, computer-based systems such as aircraft.

A common example of a complex system is an Automatic Teller Machine (ATM), which allows people to withdraw money from bank accounts which might be on the other side of the world.

Boeing has provided a five-year $1.55 million grant to UQ to establish a Boeing Professorship in Systems Engineering.

Part of the funding was ear-marked to establish the teaching laboratory, which has been equipped with workstations and software tools worth more than $3 million.

More than 300 postgraduate and undergraduate students a week, as well as researchers, are expected to use the new laboratory for aviation and aerospace research involving complex systems, such as those used on Boeing’s Wedgetail 737 Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) project.

Boeing provided funding for the AEW&C project being run in conjunction with the Commonwealth of Australia. Australia has contracted for four 737 AEW&C systems and Boeing expects to deliver the first two in 2006.

The Wedgetail system requires interdisciplinary expertise, and it is important for Australia’s defence to have the capacity to build or contribute to such systems.

Queensland Premier Peter Beattie and senior Boeing executives including Ross Dessert of the Wedgetail airspace surveillance program attended the official opening of the laboratory.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Professor Margaret Gardner congratulated Boeing on its foresight, and said the funding from the company had enabled UQ to establish one of the few systems engineering programs in the country.

“It will help develop further expertise in the aviation and aerospace industry, which employs 4000 people in Queensland,” she said.

Patrick Gill, Boeing Vice-President, 737 AEW&C Programs, said Boeing was happy to help further improve the outstanding capabilities of UQ’s engineering programs.

UQ’s first Boeing Professor of Systems Engineering, Peter Lindsay, said the IT and communications revolution meant systems were integrating together extremely quickly, highlighting the need for the development of a whole new generation of systems engineers.

“The existing international shortage of systems engineers is set to increase dramatically and to perhaps even as much as double in the next few years,” he said.

“The recent American example when more than 50 million people lost power because of a simple failure in one part of the electricity grid highlights the importance of systems engineering.

“Protection systems are supposed to isolate such failures.

“We have technology enabling massive power generation and transmission, but we still don’t understand the integration systems designed to enable systems to stand alone as a protection mechanism.

“The new lab will enable such systems to be modelled and analysed to understand how to manage such large, complex systems.”
Financiers focus on service

With a background in industry, UQ’s new Chief Financial Officer will focus on providing complete customer service to students, faculties and external clients.

Paul Mulloly, who has experience in a variety of large and complex industries, has worked as Director of Finance at the University of Auckland for the past two years.

He took up his new appointment at UQ on October 6.

He said in financial terms there was no real difference between a university and a commercial business.

“We are here to provide a service to the rest of UQ in terms of financial management, providing appropriate internal controls, management of information and financial advice,” he said.

Before entering the university environment in Auckland, Mr Mulloly coordinated finances for organisations ranging from pip fruit exportation to pharmaceutical distribution.

“My role was focused in reengineering, restructuring and devising management information systems in those industries while they were going through deregulation,” he said.

The new position of Chief Financial Officer replaces that of Bursar.

Mr Mulloly said he would use the role to place an emphasis on total customer service and anticipate financial needs and requirements at UQ.

“This team is going to be completely client-focused,” he said.

Harrowing journey ends in hope

Fleeing from country to country in constant danger, a Sudanese refugee has finally found his home and long-lost sister in Australia.

It’s been a long, 15-year walk to freedom for former “Lost Boy” Abraham Aleer.

Since the age of five, the Sudanese refugee has been running from one refugee camp to another, fleeing from soldiers and wild animals and walking daily with death.

But now he has found a new life, missing family and a sense of purpose as an Australian and a UQ Bachelor of Arts student.

The happy ending to his harrowing journey, spanning three African countries, was recently featured on Channel Nine’s 60 Minutes program.

Mr Aleer was born in Sudan and during civil unrest in 1987 his village was attacked, his father killed and he and his brother separated from their mother.

“We ran away and hid thinking we would go back later,” he said.

“But we couldn’t go back as there was nothing left.

“We saw some people walking so we followed them. We all walked together.”

Mr Aleer was one of some 18,000 “Lost Boys”, a term used to describe male children aged between five and 12 displaced by civil unrest in Sudan.

For many their only option was to run away or join the army and fight in the bloody civil war.

Walking through desolate country, they were easy prey to wild animals such as lions, crocodiles and hyenas and many died along the way.

“We survived on water and by eating leaves. Sometimes we’d catch a fish and cook it on the fire – but not always,” he said.

“My brother died on the way after mistakenly eating some poisonous leaves. Every day boys died and every day you waited for your time.”

Mr Aleer’s group arrived at a refugee camp in Ethiopia but were forced to move on when war broke out in 1991.

They finally reached the Kakuma refugee camp in north-eastern Kenya where life became more settled and Mr Aleer started school.

It was at Kakuma that he met UQ arts/social sciences student Troy O’Neill while he was doing three months, volunteer refugee work.

Mr O’Neill was amazed that not only had Abraham do it, it was my childhood. I was brought up worker.

“Getting an education in a refugee camp in the middle of the desert wasn’t easy, but not only did Abraham do it, he excelled at it,” Mr O’Neill said.

Mr Aleer was one of 82 “Lost Boys” accepted into Australia and arrived earlier this year.

With Mr O’Neill’s encouragement, Mr Aleer approached UQ.

“I was very nervous when I attended my first lecture,” Mr Aleer said.

Having never seen tall buildings, mobile phones or Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) before coming to Australia, computers presented a problem.

Mr Aleer now studies part-time and works for the Brisbane City Council helping other newly-arrived Sudanese young people settle into life in Australia.

He recently found a distant cousin living in the Brisbane suburb of Kingston caring for his now 15-year-old sister, whom his mother was carrying at the time of the attack.

Mr Aleer now lives with them and hopes to work for the United Nations or the Australian foreign affairs department as an international aid worker.

“I was a refugee for 15 years. It was my childhood. I was brought up by the international community so my responsibility is to go back and help if I can,” he said.

Every day boys died and every day you waited for your time
UniQuest Pty Ltd, UQ’s main technology commercialisation company, has unveiled the University’s first formal technology incubator.

The incubator includes office and dry laboratory facilities and is home to two start-up companies that have attracted multi-million dollar investment: Fultec Pty Ltd and QRxPharma Pty Ltd.

The facility, which provides resources to assist the commercialisation of new technologies, also accommodates the Queensland Executive of the Australian biotechnology industry’s peak body, AusBiotech Ltd.

Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Paul Greenfield officially opened the incubator on October 9.

UniQuest Managing Director David Henderson said start-up companies generally occupied such facilities for a period of around 12 months after which they sought more extensive commercial premises.

“The incubator provides an environment midway between the laboratory and the commercial world,” he said.

ON THE TRAIL OF RESEARCH

UniQuest Pty Ltd has launched a competition to reward and develop innovation at UQ.

The Trailblazer Challenge aims to: provide funding to advance research outcomes with commercial potential; develop new ideas; and reward key staff.

UniQuest Managing Director David Henderson said five prizes of $8000 each would be awarded to UQ students or employees to be used for equipment, travel or research costs.

“Verbal presentations and judging will take place on November 14. Mr Henderson said in addition to the prizes, short-listed applicants would be provided with a package of services to help progress their ideas or research activities and enhance commercial potential.

Incubator drives biotech boom

E-health victory

Ex-Ray, a novel e-technology screening tool utilising speech, text and, in the future, image, was recently awarded a prize in the e-health category of the Secrets of Australian IT Innovation Competition 2003.

Ex-Ray, which monitors a wide range of psychiatric and physical conditions, was developed by the School of Information Technology and Electrical Engineering’s Professor Joachim Diederich and the Centre for Online Health’s Professor Peter Yellowlees.

ICTE Summer courses

UQ’s Institute of Continuing and TESOL Education (ICTE) has announced its 2004 Summer courses program.

Run from January 10–February 1, the courses attract a 20 percent discount for UQ staff.

Topics include society; natural environment; art therapy; photography; creative writing; poetry; mind and body; and personal and professional development.

Information: www.icte.uq.edu.au

UQ Gatton weekend

UQ Gatton graduates are invited to attend a Back to College Weekend on December 6-7.


Information: 07 5460 1724

Sir Llew honoured

UQ Chancellor Sir Llew Edwards has been awarded an honorary doctorate by the Queensland University of Technology.

Before becoming Chancellor in 1993, Sir Llew was Queensland’s Deputy Premier from 1977–1983 and Chief Executive Officer of World Expo 88.

He holds a number of executive positions including Chair of the Asia Pacific Economic Forum and Executive Consultant to Jones Lang LaSalle.
The outstanding performance and leadership potential of seven University early-career researchers has been recognised through UQ Foundation Research Excellence Awards totalling almost $500,000. The winners of the highly sought after awards were honoured during a celebration at the UQ Centre on September 25, one of the highlights of UQ Research Week.

**AWARD WINNERS**

**MATH ADDS UP TO QUANTUM LEAP**

UQ theoretician Dr Jon Links is developing rigorous mathematical techniques to underpin quantum computers.

He has been awarded $70,000 to develop the cutting-edge project.

Dr Links, a research fellow with the School of Physical Sciences, is undertaking a detailed study into theoretical models of Bose-Einstein condensates, the coldest form of matter known to science.

Dr Links said understanding the manner in which Bose-Einstein condensates interacted through a phenomenon known as quantum tunnelling would provide the insight to build a quantum computer.

He said quantum tunnelling allowed a particle to pass through a seemingly impenetrable wall.

“A quantum computer is a way of using the physics of quantum mechanics to produce very fast processors,” he said.

“Computers are based on a binary system of zeros and ones.

“In quantum mechanics you can have zero and one working at the same time.

“The Bose-Einstein condensate plays a unique role in testing our understanding of quantum physics.

“Because a large number of particles occupy the same quantum state, the microscopic behaviour of the system is amplified to such an extent that it can be observed on the macroscopic level.”

**SULPHATE IN BODY TO BE STUDIED**

Understanding how sulphate works in the human body might lead to a cure for reduced fertility and treatments for disorders such as seizures, growth retardation and gastrointestinal disturbances.

UQ School of Biomedical Sciences senior lecturer Dr Daniel Markovich is conducting world-first research into the importance of sulphate in the body, and how its levels are controlled.

Dr Markovich has received a $65,000 award to progress his research into what is known as hyposulfateamia.

While little is known about the mineral, Dr Markovich said low sulphate levels affect growth, and have also been linked to diseases such as Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s.

“The kidneys control the levels of many minerals in the body and we’ve isolated a gene, Nas1, which plays a key role in sulphate absorption from the diet and regulates its excretion,” he said.

“Most sulphate in the body comes from food and if there is too much the excess is excreted.

“But when the Nas1 gene is missing, the body excretes large amounts of sulphate and blood levels drop to five times lower than normal.”

Using mice, Dr Markovich found that low blood sulphate levels led to reduced fertility, seizures in later life and an overall growth retardation of 25 percent.

**RUMOURS CAN CAUSE RUIN**

The spreading of rumours during periods of organisational change can cause panic and have dire commercial consequences, according to a UQ researcher.

Dr Prashant Bordia, a senior lecturer in UQ’s School of Psychology, has been awarded $55,000 for his studies into the collective impact of rumours during corporate organisational change.

“Rumours can damage reputations, erode trust and create panic, and are especially rampant during organisational change,” Dr Bordia said.

“They often pre-empt formal announcements by management, predicting the nature of the change such as mergers, or alleging dire consequences for employees like lay-offs.”

He said previous research had shown harmful corporate rumours were heard almost once a week and could cause businesses to lose consumer confidence, market share and stock value.

“They are more than just rumours, they are how we make sense of our world and we act on them, have faith in them and often live by them,” he said.

“By gaining a greater understanding of the way we deal with rumours we can become better consumers of information as individuals as well as finding better ways for organisations to deal with their impact.”
MINING DATABASE INFORMATION

A researcher at UQ’s Institute for Molecular Bioscience is opening new avenues of scientific exploration by using “database mining” to discover how cells work.

Dr Rohan Teasdale is employing the technique to dig through the incredible wealth of information contained in the genomes of mice and humans, and will use his $75,000 award to continue this work.

Dr Teasdale said combining “database mining” with traditional cell biology allowed a more intuitive approach to identifying information, and gave a greater understanding of the role different cell membranes played in physiological processes.

“Cell membranes and the proteins embedded in them are essential mediators of the transfer of material and information between cells and their environment, compartments within cells, and between regions of organ systems,” Dr Teasdale said.

Transporting newly-synthesised proteins to different cell membranes is a fundamental cellular process. Its disruption has been linked to high cholesterol and diseases including cancer.

“By combining ‘database mining’ with cell biology we will develop reliable computational prediction methods allowing us to identify membrane proteins in genomes and predict their location in the cell,” he said.

BIOETHICAL PLACE IN HISTORY

Historian Dr Sarah Ferber is redefining contemporary bioethics to include an historical dimension.

She is planning a series of articles and a book, funded by her $65,000 award.

The book will include topics such as medicine and social morality; human experimentation; women and reproductive medicine; genetic research; and euthanasia.

Dr Ferber’s project, one of the first of its kind, aims to reshape scholarly inquiry, professional medical training and public debate on bioethics.

It will also, she hopes, boost public debate by encouraging people to bring nuanced views to emotive issues.

“History is not just a body of dead facts,” Dr Ferber said.

Reflection and analysis increase understanding, help explain change, and inform the way we think about the world we’re making.

“I want to create a new idea of what medical history and bioethics are, and provide a major intervention in three emerging disciplines: the social history of medicine; the medical humanities; and bioethics.”

Dr Ferber, a lecturer in the School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics, said the historical context promoted understanding at the personal level, where medical and social values interacted.

“It helps you make comparisons and expand your choices,” she said.

INSIGHT INTO BRAIN AND SIGHT

A UQ researcher is trying to discover if the human brain uses multiple systems to produce a range of “opinions” when interpreting ambiguous information from the senses.

Dr Guy Wallis of UQ’s School of Human Movement Studies is using non-invasive techniques to stimulate regions of the cortex in a project promising unprecedented insight into the brain.

“If successful, the results will have broad impact in the field of human visual cognition and provide insight into the neural underpinnings of consciousness,” Dr Wallis said.

“The work could inspire the design of artificial vision systems and help us more fully understand, simulate and improve the essential linkages between perception, cognition and movement as they occur in a broad range of human skills.”

Dr Wallis has been awarded $65,000 to work on his project, which incorporates studies of the brain as it switches from left to right hemispheres.

Evidence suggests all humans constantly switch back and forward between the two hemispheres.

Fundamental to Dr Wallis’s work is UQ’s new Frameless Stereotactic Guidance system, which allows the seamless integration of three brain-imaging tools to assess brain activity and connectivity.

It is the only one in Australia and one of a few in the world to be used for such research.

BROADENING INTERNET CONTENT

The increasing role of broadband Internet technology in world economics and cultural innovation and preservation has made content development a lucrative research area.

Dr Philip Graham from the UQ Business School is heading an international, interdisciplinary group researching broadband content development, and has been awarded $70,000.

“Broadband is high-speed Internet access technology and is delivered via Asymmetrical Digital Subscriber Lines, optical fibre cables or microwave and satellite networks,” he said.

Dr Graham is working with researchers from the University of Waterloo’s Canadian Centre for Cultural Innovation (CCCI) on a project closely associated with the Australian Creative Resources Archive (ACRA) based at UQ Ipswich.

He said although broadband could always be improved by increasing data transfer rates, the lack of content was a major problem.

“A good analogy would be the emergence of television,” he said.

“None of the program formats that we are familiar with existed prior to television.

“It took years for content developers to create the programs we watch.

“It also took a long time for large-scale industries to emerge, copyright laws to be established, and for distribution and business production models to be sorted out.”
Fresh start for local waterways

The 2003 Healthy Waterways Report Card shows the health of Moreton Bay improved in the past year. The report card, representing a comprehensive estuarine, marine and freshwater monitoring program, was jointly coordinated by UQ, Griffith University and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

UQ Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Paul Greenfield presented the report card to the Minister for the Environment Dean Wells at a ceremony attended by Brisbane Lord Mayor Tim Quinn at New Farm Park on October 23.

Professor Greenfield, Chair of the Healthy Waterways Scientific Expert Panel, described the report card as cutting-edge. “It involves the collaboration of State Government, all the councils, research organisations and scientific organisations in this region to give us a statistically valid and very useful analysis,” he said.

The report showed despite drought and continued population growth, there had been little change in the health of freshwater streams in the region.

UQ lecturer in marine biology and a project coordinator, Dr James Udy, said UQ provided the scientific support, conducted some of the fieldwork and collaborated with the EPA to provide coordination for the estuarine and marine components. “UQ was involved in the design and implementation of the program in 1998 and has continued to play an important role since, though the majority of the field-work is currently conducted by the EPA,” Dr Udy said.
Awards for high-flying alumni

UQ has officially recognised and honoured the achievements of four of its most successful alumni.

Four high-achieving graduates were honoured with UQ alumni awards in September.

Air Vice-Marshal Julie Hammer CSC was named UQ’s Alumnus of the Year; marine scientist Dr Dhugal Lindsay the Young Alumnus of the Year; Singapore Government Minister Dr Lee Boon Yang the International Alumnus of the Year and Gloria Chan received the inaugural Alumnus Community Service Award.

The Alumnus of the Year award is presented annually by The Alumni Association of The University of Queensland Inc.

The Young Alumnus of the Year award, recognising the achievements of a graduate aged under 35; the International Alumnus of the Year award; and the Alumnus Community Service Award are initiatives of the University’s Development Office.

Ms Chan received her award in Hong Kong on September 22 and Dr Lee was presented with his award in Singapore on September 23 as part of UQ’s annual international graduation ceremonies.

The remaining awards were presented at the 2003 Courting the Greats luncheon hosted by Chancellor Sir Llew Edwards at Customs House on September 17.

An electronics engineer in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), AVM Hammer holds a Bachelor of Science with honours in physics from UQ (1976).

She also holds a Master of Science in aerosystems engineering and a Graduate Diploma in strategic studies.

Joining the RAAF in 1977, she has served in aircraft maintenance; technical intelligence; electronic warfare and command; control, communications and intelligence systems acquisition; and support.

Until her promotion to Air Vice-Marshall in August 2003, she was also Commandant of the Australian Defence Force Academy.

“I consider this award to be enormously significant not only to me personally, but also as tangible recognition of achievement by women in non-traditional fields,” AVM Hammer said.

“I hope this award might encourage young women to consider careers in engineering and the physical sciences, in the military, or even better, in both.”

In 1985, AVM Hammer was the first female engineer promoted to Squadron Leader and in 1992, the first woman to command an operational unit in the RAAF, the Electronic Warfare Squadron, being awarded a Conspicuous Service Cross for that command.

She was the first woman in the RAAF to become a member of the General List on promotion to Group Captain in 1996, and the first serving woman in the history of the ADF to be promoted to One Star level, on promotion to Air Commodore in 1999.

Dr Lindsay works at the Japan Marine Science and Technology Centre – Japan’s premier oceanographic research station.

He holds a Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts (1992) from UQ and received his PhD in aquatic biology from the University of Tokyo (1998).

His centre is a unique institution around working on developing state-of-the-art occupied submarines and remotely-operated vehicles, allowing the study of deep sea animals.

Dr Lindsay is also one of Japan’s most accomplished young haiku poets and was the first non-Japanese writer to win the prestigious annual Nakaniiuda Grand Haiku Prize.

Dr Lee, Singapore’s Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts, graduated from UQ with a Bachelor of Veterinary Science in 1971.

After working as a vet, Dr Lee became a Member of Parliament in 1984 and has served as Minister of State for Trade and Industry and Senior Minister of State for National Development; Home Affairs; and Defence.

Ms Chan completed a Bachelor of Arts in psychology and a Postgraduate Diploma in social planning at UQ and also has a Diploma in counselling.

While a student she founded the radio station 4EB, which broadcast in English and Cantonese.

She has served as a counsellor at UQ and the University of Hong Kong and is Charter President of the Rotary Club of Queensway in Australia.

Named International Woman of the Year for Services to the Community by the American Biographical Institution in 1994, she has won numerous awards for voluntary service.

A third UQ international graduation ceremony was held in Kuala Lumpur on September 25.

Sir Llew, Vice-Chancellor Professor John Hay, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International and Development) Professor Trevor Grigg and Secretary and Registrar Douglas Porter officiated at all three events.
A $5.2 million partnership with beyondblue: the national depression initiative, UQ School of Psychology researchers have developed a school-based program equipping adolescents with skills to deal with life’s challenges. It was launched by Queensland Premier Peter Beattie at Mitchelton State High School on October 7. Also attending the launch was UQ Vice-Chancellor Professor John Hay and beyondblue Chair and former Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett, as well as representatives from the schools involved.

“We want to provide knowledge and awareness through a school community approach that will help to build individual resilience and harness the good work that schools already do,” said chief investigator Professor Sue Spence.

Called the beyondblue schools research initiative, the program will involve 50 schools nationally (18 in Queensland). It will use a multi-pronged approach including curriculum-based programs in the classroom; identifying pathways to care; community forums with key partners such as health services and community groups; and a whole-of-school approach to enhance a supportive environment.

Professor Spence said the broad base of the research and the whole-of-school and community approach was a unique strategy in attempting to address adolescent depression. “This type of work coming out of UQ and Australia is leading the way in the prevention of depression,” she said.

Professor Hay said the project was a practical example of UQ research in the community. “UQ recognises the value of such important research hence our willingness to be involved in partnerships such as the beyondblue initiative,” he said.

“It is partnerships like this that strengthen the links between the University, local school communities, parents and students.”

Professor Spence said the three-year project would follow Year 8 adolescents through to Year 10. “We are looking at educating young people about mental health and wellbeing to help try to break down the barriers that prevent them seeking help,” she said.

Professor Spence said she and State Coordinator, UQ’s Dr Jeanie Sheffield, in collaboration with researchers from across Australia, had spent the past year writing curriculum for the classroom component and building links with education systems, schools and community groups.

“Red light to blue feelings”

UQ researchers have developed a program aimed at preventing and reducing the development of depression in young people.

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UQ Ipswich enters a new era

More than 300 people celebrated an important milestone at UQ Ipswich last month.

Representatives of community, government and academic attended a formal ceremony followed by lunch on October 10 to mark completion of UQ Ipswich’s Phase One development – a three-stage, $51 million transformation of the former Challinor Centre site into one of Australia’s first totally Web-enabled campuses.

Stage One construction began in 1998 and finished in time to welcome the first 500 students in February 1999.

Stage Two was completed in 2000 – a $25 million rehabilitation of eight buildings in the central Heritage Precinct plus a new, twin-block general purpose building (Building 12).

Building Eight and associated works (the $9.27 million Stage Three) was completed this year.

Queensland Premier Peter Beattie; Ipswich City Acting Mayor Paul Pisasale; Chancellor Sir Llew Edwards; Vice-Chancellor Professor John Hay; and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International and Development) Professor Trevor Grigg spoke at the ceremony.

Mr Beattie also opened Building Eight, home to the Library; Student Centre; Information Technology Services; Student Support Services; Health Service; Equity Office; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit; Student Union; Chaplaincy Service; and the Campus Manager’s office.

Sir Llew said completion of Phase One had created more than the physical infrastructure of a university – it had also created a place of intellectual vigour with a remarkably strong community tradition and one of the best town-and-gown profiles he had seen.

Professor Hay emphasised the strong ties between campus and community and said: “...the University’s future is not only entwined with the future of Ipswich City... it depends on it.”

“This campus is shaping up well, and it’s fitting to celebrate a milestone like this in the company of those who helped shape and achieve the vision,” said Professor Grigg, whose portfolio oversees the campus.
Ankle sprain
People aged between 18 and 55 years with a current ankle sprain are being sought to participate in a physiotherapy treatment trial study.

Project supervisor Dr Bill Vicenzino said UQ Musculoskeletal Pain and Injury Research Unit researchers had received encouraging results from preliminary studies of some of the treatments prescribed for ankle injuries.

Participants have to attend UQ St Lucia for a two-hour session.

Information: 07 3365 4567

Parental disability
Young people whose parents have a disability or illness are being asked to take part in a survey to gather information to develop better services and intervention programs for them.

UQ’s School of Psychology is conducting the project in collaboration with Griffith University and the Queensland Council of Carers.

People aged between 10–25 years whose parent or parents has an illness such as cancer; an intellectual or physical disability; an alcohol or drug problem; or mental illness are needed.

Information: 0413 733 578, okochi@psy.uq.edu.au

Youth obesity
Overweight and obese children aged between 5-11 are needed for a UQ study to identify syndrome indicators and establish whether increased physical activity is an effective treatment or prevention option.

Volunteers will be tested to measure body composition; insulin sensitivity; dietary intake; and physical activity level before and after a 12-week exercise program.

Tests and supervised physical activity sessions will be conducted after school weekly for 14 weeks. An exercise instructor will also conduct a weekly personal training session at each child’s home.

Information: 07 3636 5243

Adoption aftermath
A UQ project is seeking volunteers for a study comparing aspects of individual and relationship wellbeing in adult adoptees and non-adoptees.

The study focuses on people who have lived at home with two parents (adoptive or biological) for at least the first 16 years of their life.

Information: 07 3365 6257, keegan@psy.uq.edu.au

Childhood anxiety
Children with anxiety problems are needed for a UQ School of Psychology study into the effectiveness of different modes of therapy delivery for anxious children.

Participants must be 7–14 years old and have experienced problems such as being constantly worried or anxious; shyness; insecurity; or being afraid of people or particular situations.

The treatment involves either weekly, face-to-face therapy sessions for 12 weeks, or parents receiving training to conduct weekly sessions at home with professional support.

There is a $100 charge for participation, including all material.

Information: 07 3030 8361

Problem gambling
UQ psychologists are seeking volunteers for a therapy program designed to examine the benefits of Cognitive Behavioural Treatments (CBT) for problem gamblers.

The program provides participants with information, skills and strategies to help them understand and change dysfunctional gambling behaviours and deal with associated issues.

Participation is free, can be withdrawn at any time and involves six sessions, once a week for six weeks, delivered by trained clinicians.

Information: 07 3346 9417

Overweight children
Around 150 Brisbane families are needed for a research project designed to reduce childhood obesity.

The study will evaluate Lifestyle Triple P, a free, 12-week parenting program for overweight children aged from 5-10 years old.

Lifestyle Triple P is based on the Triple P – Positive Parenting Program, with extra sessions focusing on nutrition and physical activity.

Information: 07 3365 6207

Stroke therapy
People who have had a stroke affecting their arm are needed for a UQ study.

The study will assess the effectiveness of a new form of therapy.

Participants must live in Brisbane or the Gold Coast and have had a stroke causing them to only have a small amount of arm movement and an inability to reach.

They will receive 12 therapy sessions in their home and will have to attend UQ St Lucia for three tests over four months.

Information: 07 3365 4567
Self-described as a “...woman who’s going places fast” Sarah Seckold has been recognised as one of the most outstanding young business women in Queensland.

Ms Seckold, who graduated with a Bachelor of Business Communication in 2001, won the 2003 Telstra Young Business Woman of the Year Award on September 26.

There was double success for UQ when the 2003 Telstra Business Woman of the Year Award went to UQ Business School graduate Lynne Saint, Chief Financial Officer for the Mining and Metals Global Business Unit of Bechtel Corporation.

At only 22, Ms Seckold is director of The Direct Empire marketing and talent agency based in West End.

She has established relationships with some of the world’s most recognised brands including Ford, Adidas and Coca-Cola.

“My involvement in the Telstra Business Women’s Awards has attracted an overwhelming amount of attention and I’m amazed by the amount of support I’ve received from business people throughout Australia,” she said. “It’s a truly inspirational experience and I’m honoured to be recognised by such a prestigious awards process.” 

Ms Seckold, who bought The Direct Empire when she was just 19, manages more than 400 staff.

Ms Seckold completed the final semester of her degree full-time while managing the company.

She said UQ had provided her with the essential time-management skills and discipline needed to run a successful business.

“While there is a lot of trial and error and experience is important, I feel my time at UQ was invaluable in assisting me to make the best possible decisions in times of organisational change and to operate effectively on a day-to-day basis,” she said.

Queensland Business Woman of the Year, Ms Saint, who graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce in 1983 and a Postgraduate Diploma in educational studies in 1999, is accountable for the financial and commercial operations of the mining and metals sector at Bechtel – one of the world’s largest engineering and construction companies.

Ms Saint said while her commerce degree was the backbone of her business career, her educational studies were the cornerstone.

“What leaders do to coach and mentor, facilitate learning and develop others, results in teams with greater skill sets and functionality,” she said.

Test speeds childhood virus results

A UQ researcher has developed a cheaper, faster and more reliable test for two severe yet common childhood viral diseases.

The real-time Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test slashes diagnostic times from days to a matter of hours and promises to revolutionise worldwide laboratory procedures.

Dr Ian Mackay, a senior researcher with UQ’s Clinical Medical Virology Centre (the Sir Albert Sakzewski Virus Research Centre) based at the Royal Children’s Hospital, developed the test in response to outbreaks of human enteroviruses (HEV) and human metapneumovirus (hMPV) infection in Melbourne and Perth in 1986 and 1999 respectively, and Queensland during 2001.

Enterovirus 71 (EV71) can cause hand, foot and mouth disease, encephalitis, aseptic meningitis and paralysis in children.

hMPV causes serious respiratory tract disease in children and adults and until Dr Mackay’s test, it was estimated 40 percent of cases went undetected.

In 78 percent of cases during the 2001 outbreak, children were admitted to hospital for between one and 14 days with 12 cases requiring oxygen therapy.

Dr Mackay’s test allows the amplification of tiny amounts of RNA up to a billion-fold to enable easy detection and subsequent molecular manipulation. It also provides a far cheaper alternative to traditional culture methods.

He said while PCR had been available since the 1980s, real-time PCR was a more recent and significant improvement to the technique.

“Fluorescent emissions can be collected from a closed tube at any stage of the amplification process, which eliminates the risk of contamination to the laboratory environment;” he said.

Dr Mackay said real-time PCR brought many benefits to the diagnostic laboratory such as increased speed, reducing assay times from days to hours; reliability or good reproducibility; and specificity – the inclusion of an oligonucleotide probe to ensure the PCR product was as expected.

He said the PCR also allowed technicians to check whether a microbe responded to antimicrobial drugs and provided the ability to rapidly diagnose new and emerging microbes such as hMPV by monitoring viral “load” (amount or level) from patient specimens from different age groups and disease states.
Bali tribute song
A song by UQ student band Xavier to raise money for victims of the Bali terrorist bombing was played as part of the October 12 memorial service in Bali.

The band attended the ceremony to hear their tribute service in Bali. A song by UQ student band Xavier to raise money for victims of the Bali terrorist bombing was played.

The song was written by its Indonesian-born guitarist Rocky Rashid and features both Indonesian and English lyrics.

All proceeds from the song will be donated to victims.

Drummer Ellie Dunn said the band was very grateful for the sponsorship which made the Bali trip possible.

The band attended the ceremony to hear their tribute service in Bali. A song by UQ student band Xavier to raise money for victims of the Bali terrorist bombing was played.

It will provide a key networking role allowing the sharing of information and dissemination of best practice.

Together for about four months, the band’s four members, including their manager, are all UQ students.

Dean honoured
UQ Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences Executive Dean Professor Linda Rosenman will lead the newly incorporated Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (DASSH) for 2003–4.

DASSH aims to lead and promote the arts, social sciences and humanities, nationally and internationally, with emphases on the importance of teaching, research and scholarship in the arts, social sciences and humanities.

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A flat-out master of fiction

Nerida Newton: The Lambing Flat (UQ Press, $24)

A recently released UQ Press novel tells an historical tale with a modern undercurrent where historical fiction parallels 21st Century fact.

Published in October, Nerida Newton’s debut novel entitled The Lambing Flat follows two very different young people as they struggle for understanding and survival.

“In part, it tells a story often repeated in the history of Australia – that of immigrants and the hardships they suffer based on racial prejudice,” Mrs Newton said.

Described as “confident” and “powerful”, The Lambing Flat is the first fiction novel to specifically explore the Lambing Flat riots from a Chinese perspective.

Set in the 1850s and 1860s, the book follows the lives of two main characters: the first, Lok, is a young Chinese man who comes to Australia as part of the gold rush; the second, Ella, is the daughter of a grazier living in the harsh and unexplored regions of central Queensland.

Ms Newton, who completed a Bachelor of Arts at UQ and is studying for a Master of Philosophy in creative writing, said the characters more or less wrote themselves.

“The paths of the two characters cross and through their subsequent relationship, they explore what it means to belong – to a place, to another person,” she said.

She said she wrote the story mirrored events in Australian society today.

“There are a lot of parallels and I don’t think we have come as far as we think we have,” she said.

In 2002, the book won the Queensland Premier’s Literary Award for Best Emerging Author and was nominated for The Australian/Vogel Literary Award – Australia’s two major prizes for unpublished manuscripts.

Ms Newton said writing for her was a need not just a desire.

“As soon as I could put words into sentences and sentences into stories I knew that was what I wanted to do,” she said.

After taking a year off to travel – what she describes as “…the great Australian rite of passage” – she turned to education for guidance, writing the book as part of her masters thesis.

“The thesis gave me the motivation and direction to sit down and write,” she said.

She did not set out to write an historical novel.

After returning from her travels around Europe, the Middle East and Asia, she found herself unsettled and unsure of her place in the world.

“It was then she became inspired to explore stories of other people who had not found their place in society.

“The book is about displacement and finding a sense of belonging,” she said.

“The stories of Chinese gold diggers at Lambing Flat struck me as not dissimilar from the displacement and difficulties still facing immigrants today.

“It was simply too compelling a time and place to ignore so I decided to use this as my backdrop and the story unfolded around it.”

Ms Newton said she was working on a new novel based on environmental shifts during the 1960s and 1970s.

UQ success at literary awards

Professor Janette Turner Hospital, who graduated from UQ with a Bachelor of Arts in 1966, was awarded her first major Australian literary prize last month.

Professor Turner Hospital, who received an honorary doctorate from UQ in May, was awarded the $25,000 Queensland Premier’s Literary Award for Best Fiction Book for her recent novel Due Preparations for the Plague published by Harper Collins.

Her works include seven critically-acclaimed novels and four short story collections published in more than 20 countries and 11 languages.

Nine of her books have been published by UQ Press. She is currently Distinguished Writer in Residence and Professor of English at the University of South Carolina.

There was further success for UQ when postgraduate student Kimberley Starr was selected as the Best Emerging Queensland Author.

Ms Starr, who is completing a Master of Philosophy in creative writing, submitted two manuscripts for the award and both were short-listed.

The winning manuscript The Kingdom Where Nobody Dies will be published by UQ Press in September 2004. The other manuscript entitled Antiques, a mystery thriller about a museum curator specialising in bizarre collections, was written for Ms Starr’s masters thesis.

The thesis is being supervised by author and lecturer in creative writing Amanda Lohrey from UQ’s School of English, Media Studies and Art History.

There was also success for UQ Press when Catherine Batenos won the Best Children’s Book award for Rain May and Captain Daniel.

The book also won the Children’s Book Council Children’s Book of the Year Award for Younger Readers.

■ Bronwyn Lea and Dr Martin Duwell (editors), The Best Australian Poetry ($22)

This is the first in a series of anthologies to be produced annually by UQ Press to showcase contemporary Australian poetry.

Each year, a guest editor will be invited to select poems and write an introduction with contributing poets including commentators.

The inaugural issue contains works by some of Australia’s most prominent poets including Clive James, Les Murray and Judith Beveridge.

Dr Duwell was a poetry reviewer for The Australian and is a senior lecturer in Australian studies and poets at UQ.

Ms Lea is the author of Flight Animals (UQP), which won the Wesley Michel Wright Award and the FAW Anne Elder Award.

She lectures in poetics at UQ and is the poetry editor for UQP.

■ Sue Abbey and Sandra Phillips (editors), Fresh cuttings: a celebration of fiction and poetry from UQP’s Black Australian Writing series ($25)

This collection of fiction has been drawn from books in UQP’s prestigious Black Australian Writing list.

Extracts from novels have been used as self-contained short stories and are from novels such as Bilin’ Back (Vivienne Cleven); Caprice (Doris Pilkington Garimara); Unbranded (Herb Wharton); and Plains of Promise (Alexis Wright).

Between each extract is a selection of poems from such collections as Itinerant Blues (Samuel Wagan Watson); and Black Lives (Jack Davis). Sue Abbey is founding editor of UQP’s Black Australian Writing series and Sandra Phillips is the managing editor of Aboriginal Studies Press.

■ Alasdair Duncan, Sushi Central ($22)

Calvin is 16, gay and out of control.

His narrative is delivered through a fragmented and fast-paced series of emails, text messages and miniature film scripts along with more traditional descriptive passages as he deals with the pain and confusion of first love and is drawn into a world more adult than he could have imagined.

Sushi Central is a subversive black comedy about teenage angst pushing to its final, self-destructive extremes.

Alasdair Duncan, one of Australia’s youngest published novelists, was shortlisted for the Queensland Premier’s Award for Best Emerging Manuscript by a Queensland Author in 2002.
Aquaculture harvest

A $200,000 facility refurbishment has put aquaculture back on the menu at UQ.

A new aquaculture research facility coordinated by UQ's Centre for Marine Studies is expected to play a lead role alongside industry and government in advancing aquaculture research.

Queensland's growing aquaculture industry contributes more than $73 million per year to the State's economy, according to Centre for Marine Studies Director Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg.

"Aquaculture in Australia is expanding at a rate of about 14 percent per annum, and is forecast by the industry to reach a value of $2.5 billion by 2010," he said.

More than 60 species are being farmed in Australia including pearl oysters, oysters, mussels, barramundi, prawns, crayfish and algae.

The health benefits of farmed fish are its greatest attraction with many native fish species high in Omega-3.

The newly-refurbished Pinjarra Aquatic Research Station will give UQ students access to industry-relevant facilities.

UQ provides aquaculture programs from undergraduate through to postdoctoral level.

"UQ's aquaculture program holds great promise for the State," Professor Hoegh-Guldberg said.

"Thanks to Complas Industries Pty Ltd and RAD Aqua Pty Ltd, the Pinjarra Hills facility offers cutting-edge filtration systems and state-of-the-art infrastructure for aquaculture research."

The refurbished station features laboratory space; seminar room; a new, indoor, state-of-the-art, re-circulating aquaculture system; and nine ponds stocking a wide range of fish and crustaceans including redclaw crayfish and silver perch.

The $200,000 upgrade was funded in collaboration with the two industry partners and with the help of a UQ Research Infrastructure Grant.

The reopening of the facility coincided with the arrival of a new aquaculture academic to UQ, Dr Andrew Barnes from Scotland, and the launch of an edited collection on aquaculture research by Adjunct Professor John Lucas.

Dr Barnes will focus on disease solutions for prawns and finfish with his most recent experience being in the biotechnology industry developing vaccines for aquaculture.

First for nursing

An accelerated nursing degree will be launched by UQ next year to help address a nationwide nursing shortage.

Offered through UQ's Faculty of Health Sciences, the program will give graduates the option of entering the workforce after two-and-a-half years education – six months earlier than most other undergraduate courses.

They will also gain more practical experience by working in hospitals for most of the program.

Faculty of Health Sciences Executive Dean Professor Peter Brooks said the clinical component of the program would benefit the nursing profession.

"In a first for Queensland, students in the new program will receive the majority of their teaching in hospitals where they will be educated by practising professionals and gain the knowledge and skills necessary to work effectively in a healthcare environment," Professor Brooks said.

To complement the clinical approach, students will also attend lectures at UQ Ipswich to take advantage of the University's highly experienced teachers and extensive resources.

"An accelerated studies program option, involving attendance at a Summer school, will enable students to graduate mid-year when there is strong demand for graduate nurses," Professor Brooks said.

Students will be taught through the Faculty's Clinical Divisions, which already manage the clinical education of doctors.

They will benefit from the University's close partnerships with teaching hospitals and healthcare professionals.

"Changes in healthcare mean practitioners now routinely work closely with a range of healthcare providers," Professor Brooks said.

"Through the program, students will learn how to apply theoretical and clinical knowledge using case-based examples as well as specialist areas."
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**Full details** and a copy of the competition application form can be found on the [UniQuest website](http://www.uniquest.com.au) or by telephoning Anne-Marie Birkill on **07 3365 4037**.