Whether you want to upgrade your qualifications, make a career change, or pursue research in a cutting-edge environment, UQ postgraduate qualifications put you a world ahead.

UQ, as one of Australia’s leading centres for postgraduate studies, offers you an active and innovative teaching and research culture.

To expand the exceptional research being undertaken, a wide range of scholarships will be available across all disciplines to students interested in a research higher degree program. These scholarships provide recipients with a range of allowances and benefits, along with access to some of the country’s finest teaching and research staff, and state-of-the-art facilities.

Speak with staff at the Postgraduate Studies and Research Scholarships booth at the UQ Careers Fair, UQ Centre, March 24, 11am–4pm.

For more details on postgraduate study, visit www.uq.edu.au/study
MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

The UQ Business School’s expansion into the Brisbane CBD is a welcome and long-overdue development for both the city and the University.

It was a pleasure to welcome many friends, both new and old, who attended the official launch of the new centre recently. I have been delighted by the warm reception the UQ Business School Downtown has received.

The UQ Business School recently became the first comprehensive business school in Australia to achieve AACSB International (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) accreditation. This is the highest standard of achievement for business schools worldwide and helps cement UQ’s position as one of the top three universities in Australia.

The UQ Business School Downtown will deliver the School’s internationally benchmarked MBA program to CBD-based professionals. There has been growing interest in the city for such a facility, and in the first weeks of operation the School has experienced strong demand from prospective students.

UQ is proud to be a research-intensive, comprehensive university, and also an institution which has close connections with leaders of industry and commerce.

The CBD facility is not only an important new learning centre – its facilities are open for use by the Brisbane business community for corporate presentations, training and events.

I congratulate Executive Dean of the Faculty of Business Economics and Law Professor Ian Zimmer and UQ Business School Head Professor Tim Brailsford for their far-sightedness in creating this exciting new centre for UQ in Brisbane.

Professor John Hay, AC
Talking diversity at UQ

Irish Ambassador, His Excellency Declan Kelly, will be guest speaker at this year’s Diversity Week awards ceremony.

Ambassador Kelly, who began his extensive career in foreign affairs and public administration three decades ago, has been Ireland’s representative in Australia since July 2002 and is concurrently Ambassador to New Zealand since September 2002.

He will address a gathering at Customs House on May 14. Vice-Chancellor Professor John Hay, AC, will present two sets of awards.

The inaugural Vice-Chancellor’s Equity and Diversity Awards will recognise contributions that improve equity or diversity or raise awareness of these issues at UQ.

An award of $5000 will be presented to an individual and $10,000 will go to an organisational unit.

Four Diversity Action Project Awards of $2500 have been made available for projects with an emphasis on enhancing cross-cultural understanding and anti-racism policies.

Diversity Week, which will run from May 10-14, this year takes the theme of “All-Together-Different”.

The aim is to raise awareness and increase understanding about issues such as disability; sexuality; cultural, linguistic and religious diversity; gender identity; family and carer responsibilities; racism; and Indigenous Australian culture.

Equity Office Director Ann Stewart has encouraged staff and students to participate by running activities celebrating diversity.

“Acceptance of diversity means there is a place in our community for everyone, and celebration of diversity acknowledges that it enriches us all,” Ms Stewart said.

Grants up to $1000 are available to promote diversity on campus.

Nominations for the Vice-Chancellor’s Equity and Diversity Awards close on April 16, and nominations for the Diversity Action Project Awards and applications for grants must be lodged by April 2.

Staff and students can attend the awards ceremony on May 14. Bookings can be made through faculty offices ($45 a head).

Information: www.uq.edu.au/about/diversityweek

Researchers dig up a storm

by Miguel Holland

Answers to agricultural and climate change and their impact on the Australian environment can be found lying in the dust, according to UQ geographical and Earth Sciences researchers.

Digging up island swamps and launching weather stations into dust storms should confirm if European farming has hurt Australian agriculture.

Australian topsoil has been blowing over New Zealand for years, however, a UQ research team is tracking the history and environmental impacts of dust storms from their origin, in the channel country of western Queensland.

The researchers are collecting sediments from old dust storms to build an Australian dust fingerprint.

This fingerprint will help tell if hoofed animals introduced by European farming caused widespread erosion and contamination.

To understand dust movements, the researchers have been digging up New Zealand mires and glaciers and Australian island swamps.

The team includes climatology senior lecturer Dr Hamish McGowan; senior research fellow for the Advanced Centre for Queensland University Isotope Research Excellence (ACQUIRE) Dr Balz Kamber; and Earth Sciences senior lecturer Dr Massimo Gasparon.

Geographical Sciences PhD student Samuel Marx is completing the New Zealand research.

Dr McGowan said peat was taken from steamy, snake-infested swamps on Stradbroke Island in 40-degree-celsius heat.

A stainless steel tube extracted 50-centimetre cores for analysis.

“Chemical and physical parameters of retrieved dust are compared to potential source areas from outback Australia, which have recently been characterised by Dr Kamber,” Dr McGowan said.

“The analysis of minute dust samples relies on availability of world-class instrumentation and laboratory space as well as technical know-how at UQ.”

Dr McGowan previously travelled to south-west Queensland launching weather stations in dust storms that had blown sediment across the Tasman.

Dr McGowan said atmospheric dust did much more than get in people’s eyes and or make the washing dirty, it also affected the climate.

Dust from Queensland also plays an important role for Southern Ocean marine life such as plankton which have followed dust storms to feed.

Dr McGowan previously travelled to south-west Queensland launching weather stations in dust storms that had blown sediment across the Tasman.

The results of the study are expected to be known in six months.
The city’s newest state-of-the-art teaching and corporate function facility opened its doors on March 1. UQ Business School Downtown, situated on level 19 of Central Plaza One in the heart of Brisbane’s financial district, delivers the University’s internationally accredited MBA program.

The venue is also available for hire for corporate functions, seminars and executive training.

“UQ Business School’s expansion into the Brisbane CBD came as a result of considerable demand for city delivery of the School’s postgraduate business programs,” Head of the UQ Business School Professor Tim Brailsford said.

The venue features tiered lecture theatres, private study workstations, board and conference rooms, syndicate rooms, and generous café-style breakout spaces, all with extensive data access and provision for wireless communications.

UQ Business School Downtown also has direct access to the UQ Cybrary, the University’s world-class online library service featuring a combination of print and electronic information.

Aiming for a corporate edge both aesthetically and functionally, architectural firm Bligh Voller Nield used a variety of materials to reflect a modern corporate image as well as links to the University’s heritage, such as Helidon sandstone featured in the foyer.

Plenty of natural light and a focus on the venue’s magnificent views are complemented by a careful blend of acoustic privacy and architectural openness.

Designed to be corporate-based, multifunctional and sensitive to educational requirements, the architects drew on international standards and utilised cutting-edge technical equipment and furniture through the fit-out.

Professor Brailsford said the facility’s contemporary design reflected the vitality and strength of ideas generated from education and research.

“We’ve focused very heavily on flexibility, space efficiency and communications infrastructure to ensure premium product delivery to students and corporate clients,” he said.

Professor Brailsford said the new facility provided a platform for enhanced collaboration with business.

The facility was officially launched on Friday, March 5, by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor John Hay, AC.
The University will present the first exhibition of Australian self-portraiture to mark the opening of The James and Mary Emelia Mayne Centre. UQ Chancellor Sir Llew Edwards, AC, and Vice-Chancellor, Professor John Hay, AC, will officially jointly open the Mayne Centre, located at UQ’s St Lucia campus, on Thursday, April 15.

This will be followed during the weekend by various public events including a UQ Community Day on Saturday, April 17.

The new Centre – previously called Mayne Hall – has been transformed from an auditorium, used very infrequently for graduations, examinations and occasional musical performances, into an art gallery and new home for the University Art Museum.

To Look Within: Self Portraits in Australia will run at the museum from April 15 to June 20.

This unique specialist collection will be established over time from a core group of self-portraits currently in the University collection, including works by Jeffrey Smart and Mary Christison," he said.

The Director of the National Gallery of Victoria, Dr Gerard Vaughan, will open the exhibition, which includes mostly paintings, by a diverse range of artists including: Rupert Bunny; Hugh Ramsay; Tom Roberts; Arthur Streeton; William Dargie; Tracy Moffatt; Margaret Olley; Jeffrey Smart; and Gordon Bennett.

UQ staff and their families, members of the University community and the public are invited to the UQ Community Day on April 17.

At 10.30am the University Art Museum will run talks about the architectural project, the opening exhibition and future directions.

Mr Sayers will give a talk at 2pm entitled What do self-portraits tell us? Self-portraiture in Australia has been largely a phenomenon of the 20th century, according to Mr Sayers.

“This reflects the lack of an art world in Australia for much of the colonial period,” he said.

Featuring the coloured glass window by Nevil Matthews, the Centre provides two floors of galleries for display of collections and exhibitions.

The venue also boasts ultra-modern collection storage, a boardroom, offices and a music performance area.

The Mayne Centre is named in honour of Dr James O’Neil Mayne (1861-1938) and his sister Mary Emelia Mayne (1858-1940), the last surviving members of Brisbane’s Mayne family, who were benefactors to the University. Among their donations was the land for the St Lucia campus.

Professor Hay said the University was extremely grateful to The Atlantic Philanthropies which provided a generous $5 million donation towards the transformation of Mayne Hall.

“It is an important cultural project for Brisbane and the University and it appropriately honours Dr James O’Neil Mayne and Miss Mary Emelia Mayne,” he said.
William Robinson self portrait with goose feathers, 1989 (detail)

Jeffery Smart self portrait, 1993 (detail)

Mary Christison self portrait, 1878 (detail)

The James and Mary Emelia Mayne Centre during renovations
A breath of fresh air for research

The University has developed world-leading technology to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

by Andrew Dunne

UQ research into reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions could add $25 billion to Queensland’s economy.

Dr Paul Massarotto, Principal Research Fellow with the University’s CO₂ program, said the technology had the potential to help sequester most of the current 45 million tonnes per year of CO₂ emitted from Queensland’s coal-fired power generating plants.

He said the process involved injecting the CO₂ into deeper and uneconomic coal seams, sending the carbon back to where it came from.

“The beauty of the process is that as coal adsorbs the CO₂ it releases extra coal seam methane, which can be recovered as a clean-burning fuel,” Dr Massarotto said.

“The complete cycle could make our coal-fired power plants zero-emissions facilities.”

He said by using this technology many large industrial sites in Queensland, and around the world, could reduce atmospheric emissions of CO₂ and also gain economic benefits.

“Queensland could derive large economic benefits were it to become a world-first site for CO₂ sequestration, attracting carbon credits of up to $500 million a year or more for the next 30 to 50 years,” he said.

“This alone could be worth more than $15 billion. Additionally, the technology has the potential to increase Queensland’s coal seam methane recoverable resources by between 25 percent and 50 percent, potentially adding another $7 to $10 billion to Queensland’s economy through sales of this clean fuel.”

Dr Massarotto said the International Energy Agency had identified Australia as the prime world region for implementing this geological CO₂ sequestration technology, particularly at large point source emitters such as coal-fired power plants and big industrial processing plants.

UQ’s extensive research program seeks to accelerate technical and environmental capability in deep coal sequestration of CO₂, extending to field trials and eventual adoption in Queensland and New South Wales, if demonstrated to be viable.

Though pilot tested in the USA and Canada, there are still several knowledge gaps being researched by the 14-member UQ team.

The project is supported by the Australian Research Council through two substantial projects grants.

UQ researchers recently presented the technology program to other supporting organisations including Origin Energy CSG Limited; Stanwell Corporation Limited; Southern Pacific Petroleum NL; Queensland Environmental Protection Agency; the CSIRO; and The Illinois Geological Survey at the University of Illinois (UIUC).

Research workshop

UniQuest, UQ’s main technology transfer company, is running a complimentary two-day Research Commercialisation Workshop during May 11 and 12.

It is designed to give PhD students and early stage postdoctoral fellows an opportunity to learn about future directions for their research.

The workshop will cover topics such as career opportunities; attracting research funding from industry and the private sector; protecting intellectual property; and commercialising research.

25-year reunion

The UQ Development Office is organising a 25-year reunion for the class of 1978 on the weekend of June 4-6.

All alumni chapters and networks have been invited to suggest specific events they would like included over the weekend for discipline-specific graduates.

A Saturday night dinner is planned at the UQ Centre, with a breakfast tour of the Regatta Hotel on Sunday.

Planning meetings are already under way and will continue monthly from March 4.

Arthritis tests

A new medication effectiveness test is being offered to those with chronic pain and stiffness due to osteoarthritis.

The trial is part of a national study by UQ’s Centre for General Practice.

The study uses Individual Medication Effectiveness Tests that give individualised feedback about medication.

A previous study showed up to 70 percent of people could be using medication that is either not working or is no better than safer, alternative medication.

Kids needed for study

Children with anxiety problems are needed to participate in a UQ study.

UQ School of Psychology researchers are studying the effectiveness of different modes of therapy delivery for anxious children.

Participants must be aged seven to 14 and have experienced problems such as being constantly worried or anxious; feeling shy or insecure; or being afraid of particular situations.

Families will be charged a $100 participation fee.

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in brief

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* Information: Kieran Hargreaves, 07 3346 3924.

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* Information: 1800 038 464 (toll-free) or 07 3240 6154, imet@sph.uq.edu.au

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* Information: 07 3030 8361, joyce@psy.uq.edu.au or degroot@psy.uq.edu.au

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* Information: Julia Renaud, 07 3365 6937.
Thousands of students are expected to converge on the University’s UQ Centre this month to speak with potential employers at the annual UQ Careers Fair.

The 2004 event, taking place on Wednesday, March 24, will be the largest careers experience ever held at UQ and one of the biggest in Queensland with more than 70 private industry and government employers from across the country attending.

For the first time, panel presentations will be held in the University’s Schonell theatres. These will involve staff, graduates and employers speaking on aspects of the employment process.

Dean of Students, Dr Lisa Gaffney, said there would be something of interest for everyone.

“Both being able to talk to potential employers and attend the panel presentations will allow students to think about the range of career opportunities open to them. They may discover options they had not previously considered,” she said.

Employers attending include: Brisbane City Council; the Commonwealth Bank; Engineers Australia; KPMG; Qantas; the Department of Industry Tourism and Resources; and the Department of Communities and Department of Child Safety.

During the event, UQ’s Student Support Services will coordinate presentations demonstrating job interview skills, resume writing and other career planning activities.

Dr Gaffney said students could attend the fair any time between 11am and 4pm to meet with employers at their booth and display area.

“For UQ students, the event offers a unique opportunity to meet face-to-face with leading employers,” she said.

Dr Gaffney recommended students visit the Careers Fair website at www.uq.edu.au/careersfair in advance so they could single out the employers they would like to talk to. The program for the panel presentations will also be featured on the webpage.
A UQ PhD study is shedding light on how baby boomers approach financial planning decisions.

Dr Malcolm Johnson’s research has found the cognitive age of many baby boomers is 10 years below their actual age.

“It is quite common for a 50-year-old to think, act and feel like a 40-year-old,” Dr Johnson said.

“This denial of ageing may subconsciously postpone the recognition of a need to plan for retirement, resulting in insufficient income at a time when they really want to explore new lifestyle options.

“The bottom line is that 70 percent of baby boomers believe they will need an income exceeding $30,000 per year in retirement, but only 20 percent expect to receive this amount.”

Dr Johnson was awarded his PhD at a graduation ceremony in December. He conducted three studies, and has presented his findings to the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC).

Dr Johnson is believed to be the first person in the world to apply a psychological perception model to a model of financial planning, to understand why baby boomers approach financial planning decisions in particular ways.

He conducted three studies – a pilot study in Brisbane and Melbourne; a quantitative study of University superannuation members; and a third study of self-employed people and employees in south-east Queensland.

His research confirms a Canadian study in which people ranked talking about money matters with family as difficult as talking about death.

Age-old money worries

Factoring in technology

A unique online program run by UQ’s Key Centre for Human Factors is developing safe, productive and healthy workplaces.

From the design of safe aviation operations to more effective road traffic systems and patient-centred clinical information systems, the Master of Human Factors program allows students to apply human factors principles to their own fields.

One of the first students to enrol in the online program, which began in 2002, was interaction designer Ash Donaldson who is adapting what he has learned to his professional work.

Mr Donaldson recently completed a contract leading the design of new, online, self-service applications for Centrelink in Canberra and is now working on a project for Wotif.com, the online booking facility for last-minute hotels and holiday packages.

“Human factors helps in terms of research methodology. For example, software is designed by a software engineer who may not understand the actual needs of the user,” he said.

Mr Donaldson said the benefits of using human factors in the workplace were increased efficiency and a lower level of frustration because the technology developed was purpose-built for the user.

The program draws from the fields of psychology; ergonomics; industrial and software engineering design; and management to achieve better integration between people and technology.

Students can choose specialist courses from a range of industry-based electives including mining, medicine and aviation.

They are able to interact with other students using the WebCT online teaching delivery application.

This provides a virtual classroom allowing lecturer-facilitated discussion, student presentations and group work.

Program coordinator Anne Miller said students were applying what they learned to their professional lives.

“The way Ash uses coursework to enhance his everyday work is a fabulous example of life-long learning and how online education can support this,” she said.

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Researchers from UQ’s School of Music are seeking first-time mothers for a project exploring music and babies.

The project aims to explore the experience of mothers singing to their babies and how singing lullabies can improve a mother’s relationship with her baby; assist in coping with the demands of motherhood; and improve the overall sense of well-being of both mother and baby.

The Sing, soothe, sleep: combining music and motherhood project will begin in late March and run for approximately 10 to 13 weeks. The research will be based primarily at the School of Music at UQ’s St Lucia campus but some work will be carried out in the volunteers’ homes.

Researchers are looking for first-time mothers aged between 25 and 35 years with babies from six-weeks-old to participate.

The project will involve a series of one-on-one interviews; trialing the use of lullaby singing with babies; keeping record of emotional responses and moods during this process; video taping lullaby singing; and keeping record of the lullabies sung.

To participate or for more information, contact Liz Mackinlay, 07 3365 6712, e.mackinlay@uq.edu.au, or Felicity Baker, 07 3365 7340, f.baker1@uq.edu.au

The University is offering a free treatment program for people who have a problem with gambling.

The program, run by qualified psychologists and funded by a Responsible Gambling Research Grant from Queensland Treasury, is being held at UQ’s St Lucia campus.

Program leader Professor Tian Oei of the School of Psychology said some common indicators that could be used to identify problem gambling were:

- If a person had tried to cut back or stop gambling;
- If a person had borrowed or stolen money to gamble or had other financial problems as a result of their gambling;
- If gambling had caused problems with relationships, jobs or other important aspects of a person’s life;
- If a person felt “high” when gambling, depressed after losing, anxious or irritable when unable to gamble; and
- If a person had felt guilty about gambling or if they have been told they had a gambling problem.

Supervising psychologist Dr Leanne Casey said treatment within the program involved attending weekly sessions for six weeks, where the focus would be on teaching skills and strategies to help people take charge of their gambling.

“Volunteers will be asked to complete confidential questionnaires before, during and after treatment, to help us in ongoing assessment of our treatment program,” she said.

Anyone interested in the program or with any questions should telephone Andrea at the School of Psychology on: 07 3346 8417; email gambling@psy.uq.edu.au

Images of UQ online

UQ Images, run by the Photo Library within UQ’s Office of Marketing and Communications, is now on the Web.

The website allows users to browse and select generic photographs depicting life and activities at the University.

Online selections are available at cost to the University’s organisational units and staff, students and their families.

Others requiring photographs should contact Diana Lilley by emailing uqimages@uq.edu.au

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Facts and fun for students

A program combining entertainment and social events and a chance to learn about opportunities at the University proved a hit for thousands of new students.

Making friends, learning about university life and navigating around campuses without getting lost was all part of the Orientation experience for thousands of UQ students last month.

During the St Lucia campus Market Day, the UQ Union’s biggest event of the year, students helped themselves to 13,000 diaries and 10,000 free calico showbags.

Student Centre acting manager Sherrie Hoang said about 25 guides were hired to show students around the St Lucia campus.

“We had an information booth at the Brian Wilson Chancellery so when students got off buses they would be welcomed by friendly faces,” she said.

“We also had staff in a tent from Brisbane City Council to direct students and provide timetabling advice.”

This year’s Orientation was split into pre-Orientation, Orientation week and recovery week.

Ms Hoang said the fine weather contributed to the smooth running of Market Day.

“Thirty thousand people were expected and 30,000 must have turned up because it seemed like there were more people than last year,” she said.

“Last year it rained and the event had to be moved to Mayne Hall, which meant UQ SPORT activities and the clubs and societies were far away.”

UQ Union activities organiser Derryn Humphries said about 300 people attended the welcome barbecue.

Ms Humphries said the Union’s Big Gig was the climax to the week with popular bands Bodyjar, Rocket Science, Shutter-speed and Pete Murray all performing.

Information sessions for international students and computing workshops at the Library were also popular.

UQ SPORT’s rockclimbing exhibit attracted attention as students signed up with the 140 UQ clubs and societies.

At UQ Ipswich, about 1100 new students took part in Orientation, the highest intake of new students since the campus opened in 1999.

UQ Ipswich’s marketing and development officer Loretta Porche said O-Week activities included general orientation sessions; live bands; market stalls; library tours; computer skill classes; tours of Ipswich; and a free barbecue.

This year, the campus welcomed more than 200 international students and its first intake of 60 nursing students.

At UQ Gatton, students made the most of the Boxers, Boots and Hats dance, riding the mechanical bull and enjoying the music of band Burst.

There was also a “beach” party with mini-sandpit and mechanical surfboard.

Student Lisa Cansdale won an Apple iPod player for being the 500th person to log on to the new UQ Union website at: www.uqunion.uq.edu.au
B in brief

Passport program
A fourth-year UQ student was one of five Australian students to undertake a three-week placement in Asia as part of the Certified Practising Accountant (CPA) Passport Program.

Bachelor of Commerce/Law student Ratha Nabaniham was placed with Malaysia’s Genting Highlands Resort, 50 kilometres from Kuala Lumpur.

The program places around 400 university accounting students with Australian and overseas employers, with five being chosen to complete their work experience with Asian-based firms.

The program, which runs during February and December, is the largest of its type in Australia.

Employment service
Student Support Services has launched a new online employment service enabling students to search for jobs within their fields of study.

The new service, called UQCareerHub, is similar to popular employment sites such as Careerone.

However, UQCareerHub is designed as a “one stop shop” connecting UQ students, graduates and prospective employers to degree-related employment opportunities. The site, www.careerhub.uq.edu.au, features employment information, work experience, vocational work and industry placements.

New school launched
The importance of interdisciplinary skills was stressed at the launch of UQ’s new School of Social Work and Applied Human Sciences.

Acting Head of the School Associate Professor Jill Wilson, said the School needed to update in order to stay ahead of the new problems arising in the human services industry.

The School combines the former School of Social Work and Social Policy and the Behavioural Studies Program. It has 1210 students and 33 academic staff.

Coolest discovery in science
A chilly breakthrough by UQ physicists has brought the quantum world a step closer.

While Brisbane was experiencing a record 41.7-degree Celsius heatwave during February, a laboratory at UQ was one of the coldest places in the Universe.

UQ physicists led by research fellow Dr Chris Vale and Professor Halina Rubinsztein-Dunlop produced the coldest known substance, cooling atoms to almost absolute zero (273.15 Celsius) on February 20.

They have achieved a new state of matter known as a Bose-Einstein condensate, or BEC for short.

“We succeeded in cooling a sample of 20,000 rubidium atoms to a temperature just 100 billionths of a degree above absolute zero, or 0.0000001 degrees Kelvin,” Dr Vale said.

“When certain atoms get this cold, they form a BEC. There have been several BECs made in laboratories around the world, including one in Canberra and one in New Zealand.

“The UQ experiment, however, is one of only a handful in the world, and the first in the southern hemisphere, created on an atom chip.”

Dr Vale said traditional BEC experiments had provided many valuable insights but were not suitable for making devices.

“This is the reason why Australia’s newest BEC in Brisbane is so significant,” he said.

“The atom chip is a circuit of microscopic wires very similar to computer chips, and is a lot smaller than traditional experiments.

“These could form the basis for future quantum technologies. However, there are many fundamental questions to be answered beforehand.”

The breakthrough, funded as part of a five-year, $1.4 million Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Program grant, was conducted in UQ’s Atom Optics laboratory using an atom trapping and cooling apparatus and associated laser equipment. It follows many years of painstaking work.

UQ has one of the largest centres for atom optics research in the southern hemisphere, with 20 researchers and postgraduates pursuing projects.

Rapid advances in cooling atoms using lasers and magnetic fields in the 1990s led to the first observation of a Bose condensate in 1995 in Colorado, USA. Since that time, there has been an explosion of interest in this field.

Professor Rubinsztein-Dunlop said BECs were a “dream come true” for physicists.

“They are an essential component of technology such as the Global Positioning System, which requires accurate time-keeping with atomic clocks,” she said.

“Atom lasers, made by extracting a beam of atoms from a BEC, may lead to far superior scientific measurement than can be achieved with ordinary lasers.”

The UQ team is now planning to study the dynamic properties of such systems, and look at the transition from the everyday classical world to the quantum realm.
Eagle crash lands at UQ

An injured raptor probably would have died without intervention by veterinary staff from UQ’s Small Animal Hospital.

by David Ashkanasy

A wedge-tailed eagle named Lilly almost joined her meal of road-kill when she was clipped by a car near Dalby, west of Toowoomba, last month.

Lilly’s leg was broken in three places and the diagnosis would have been dire if it had not have been for the quick thinking of a passing motorist, some wildlife carers and a UQ avian expert.

Originally taken to Australia Zoo, Lilly was picked up by wildlife carers Bert and Jacqie Fraser who rushed her to UQ’s Small Animal Hospital when they realised the injury’s severity.

At the hospital, a pin was threaded through three parts of Lilly’s leg and an “external fixation” was attached that stabilised the broken leg through interweaving pins.

Adjunct Professor Doneley, who performed the surgery, said Lilly’s leg would take about two months to heal but rehabilitation would take much longer.

“If you let them go without rehabilitation they will die very quickly because of lack of fitness,” he said.

Lilly is now back in the care of Mr and Mrs Fraser in Maleny where she will be released back into the wild after about six months of rehabilitation.

Professor Doneley said he saw up to six wedge-tailed eagles a year at his Toowoomba clinic.

“Unfortunately it happens a lot because they [wedge-tailed eagles] are carrion eaters, so one of their main foods is road-kill,” he said.

“And being large birds they are very slow to take-off.”

UQ’s Small Animal Hospital paid for the surgery through its injured wildlife program, which includes possums, exotic birds, snakes, lizards and the many other animals found in Brisbane’s surrounds.

The hospital spends up to $50,000 per year treating wild animals and up to $100,000 treating stray animals.

Professor Doneley said vet clinics, such as UQ’s Small Animal Hospital, and wildlife carers received injured wild animals daily but they had to pay for the surgery with their own money.

“A few years ago there was a survey for vets by vets that showed that Queensland vets spend three million dollars a year treating wildlife without any reimbursement from government,” he said.

Professor Doneley advised people who found injured animals to contact their local vet and to also appreciate that vets treated wild animals “out of the goodness of their hearts.”

From left: X-ray technician Anne Rose, veterinary science student Caren McCormick and nurse Debra Laws with Lilly. Photos: Richard Waugh
Six UQ students ventured into the sun-scorched lands of western Queensland in December to explore the worlds of two small towns.

The students, part of the literary club UQ Vanguard, spent a week writing about, drawing and photographing Quilpie and Eromanga.

The result has been a special Town Portrait Edition of UQ Vanguard’s monthly magazine.

The two towns are located about 1000 km west of Brisbane in the heart of Queensland’s cattle country. Eromanga is Australia’s furthest town from sea and Quilpie is known as the “home of the Boulder Opal”.

UQ Vanguard president Max Leskiewicz said club members had wanted the chance to write about places they knew nothing about.

“I had been planning for some time to take a group of artists and
writers to a remote place to paint, write and draw about what it felt like to be there,” Mr Leskiewicz said.

“Because really we have no idea about what goes on in towns out west.

“Speaking to the people out there we felt terrible about how they knew everything about Brisbane and what’s going on in our lives but we knew nothing about their lives.”

Mr Leskiewicz said they encouraged the local communities to submit stories and artwork for the magazine.

“It was amazing how these small communities contained so many fantastic writers and artists who create all these works about their lives,” he said.

“In the city, we try to distract ourselves from our own lives by drawing and writing about things that are foreign to us.

“But in Quilpie, they had all these works exploring their own situations.”

During the week-long stay, the UQ Vanguard team stayed with John and Wendy Tully who live on a farm 80km from Quilpie.

“When we arrived John pulled out this huge collection of short stories and poems that he had written over the years,” Mr Leskiewicz said.

“And at night he would sit down and talk to us about everything he had experienced during his long years there.”

The Quilpie Shire Council sponsored UQ Vanguard students: Mr Leskiewicz, Katherine Del Mar, Paul Cushworth, Matyas Kochardy, Adam Cholinski and Dan O’Meara.

UQ Vanguard also holds an annual literature competition called literARTure that has a $3500 first prize.

One of the major roles of the UQ Union during 2004 will be to address student concerns, according to recently elected president Margot Balch.

Ms Balch, who ran for president as part of the Focus team, said important issues for students were the levels and availability of Centrelink benefits.

She said the University strongly supported the UQ Union in allowing it to operate independently and address student concerns.

“The University is quite good at allowing us to represent students and recognises that we do represent students and in putting people who are appointed on to University committees,” she said.

Previously the UQ Union education officer, Ms Balch said her transition to president was a natural progression.

“The role of president is largely to facilitate all office bearers within the UQ Union and to coordinate the campaign and get it working smoothly,” she said.

As president she will voice student opinion on University Senate and various committees.

A Bachelor of Commerce/Economics student, Ms Balch said as President she would examine how the recent higher education reforms would be implemented at UQ in order to get the best possible outcomes for students.

The UQ Union provides a range of advocacy, assistance and information services for students including assistance with academic appeals; emergency loans; help finding casual work and accommodation; information on women’s, postgraduate and sexuality issues; and legal advice.

Ms Balch said it was the UQ Union’s role and her responsibility as president to keep student issues on the public agenda.

“If they are in the public eye and if they are of public importance then they become electoral issues and if they are electoral issues then they will be addressed,” she said.

However, despite her strong views on higher education, Ms Balch said she had no desire to enter the political world after completing her University studies.

Instead she hopes to work for one of the major world banks as a macro-economist, investigating global economic trends.

The role of president is largely to facilitate all office bearers within the
UQ Union
On track with rail study

UQ architectural students are working with America’s Columbia University and QR to examine development around Brisbane’s railway corridor.

The results of an intensive workshop between postgraduate students from both institutions were presented at a public forum, Brisbane Discussion: 20 questions, at Brisbane Customs House in February.

During the forum, researchers discussed a range of issues related to the south-eastern rail corridor with a panel of experts, including representatives of UQ, QR, Queensland Transport and Brisbane City Council.

A closed presentation of future development design ideas by UQ and Columbia University researchers preceded the forum.

Their research uses multi-media and computer-aided design, borrowing techniques used in cinematography to convey ideas through images.

Students, headed by Faculty of Engineering, Physical Sciences and Architecture lecturer Kathi Holt-Damant, conducted a pilot study in 2003 that included the land on either side of the railway corridor from Roma Street Station to Toowong.

Eight UQ Master of Philosophy (design) students are collaborating with 12 post-professional Master of Urban Design students from Columbia University.

“Our primary interest is in the quality of these urban and architectural environments, particularly the impact of development on the local communities,” Ms Holt-Damant said.

“Brisbane’s railway corridors could be extraordinary spaces similar to the Brisbane River, which is also a very large corridor.”

She said the final design ideas from the project would offer better pedestrian access and community amenities without the loss of open public space.

“In open space terms, the railway corridor should be considered one of our most important linear green spaces as well as an efficient system of transportation.”

The research was funded by a UQ New Staff Start-up Grant and QR. Columbia University Books will publish a book based on the research.
Sports scholarships fire up new students

Exciting young sports stars entering first-year University represent more than a third of students receiving 2004 UQ Sporting Scholarships announced this month.

Five of the 13 prestigious Full Scholarships went to budding talent straight out of school including national road racing junior champion cyclist Hannah Banks, junior world champion rower Sally Kehoe and rugby lock Thomas Hockings.

They join a stellar list of recipients made up of Australian and National age group representatives at the University.

Thirteen Full Sport Scholarships and 25 Development Scholarships were awarded this year as part of a continuing partnership between UQ SPORT and The University of Queensland Alumni Association Inc.

Sport and Recreation Manager for UQ SPORT Ben Laidlaw said the potential of the 2004 recipients was very high with many expected to reach the highest levels in their sports.

“The scholarship program has long supported elite student athletes such as Kieran Perkins, Susie O’Neill and Nathan Sharpe,” he said.

2002-2003 Sports Scholarship recipient Joshua Graham will benefit from his continuing scholarship after being selected for the Australian Super Sevens Rugby Squad touring the world.

The Full Sport Scholarship holders for 2004 are: Sam Conrad, Sally Kehoe and David Galley (rowing); Stephen Moore, Joshua Graham and Thomas Hockings (rugby union); Jacinta Boyd and John Burstow (athletics); Andrew Mewing (swimming); Martin Collins (volleyball); Suzannah Fraser (water polo); Anna Sheldon (orienteering); and Hannah Banks (cycling).

Queensland javelin champion Joshua Robinson was awarded the E.T. Brown Athletics Scholarship joining 2002 Commonwealth Games athlete Melanie Kleeburg who is continuing her two-year scholarship.
B in brief

Sports breakfast
All-conquering Australian cricket coach John Buchanan will be special guest for The University of Queensland Sports Breakfast at the picturesque Roma Street Parklands on Wednesday, April 21.

Mr Buchanan, one of the most successful coaches of the modern era, will be fresh from Australia’s one-day and test match series in Sri Lanka.

The second annual UQ Sports Breakfast will reunite sporting alumni and welcome those with a passion for sport.

Guests will be given a rare insight into Australia’s quest to conquer their last frontier in 2004 – the test series with Sri Lanka and India on the sub-continent.

Tickets to the UQ Sports Breakfast are $50 with tables of 10 available.

• To register or for further information: 07 3346 9691, www.uqsport.uq.edu.au

DNA
DNA – the 7th international conference on ancient DNA & associated biomolecules: July 10-17, UQ St Lucia

Hosted by the School of Social Science and School of Biomedical Sciences, this international conference will reflect on the latest developments in archaeology; palaeontology; forensic sciences; molecular-genetics; biochemistry; and ancient and modern history.

Information: 07 3365 7252, enquiries.dna7@uq.edu.au

ENTOMOLOGY
XXII international congress of entomology: August 15-21, Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre

This landmark event will cover topics including genetics and evolutionary biology; managing insects on plants; biodiversity and biogeography; pesticides, resistance, transgenics and genomics; and physiology and immunity. Abstracts for the congress must be received by March 31. Speakers include Peter Raven (Director, Missouri Botanical Gardens, United States); Professor May Berenbaum (University of Illinois, United States); Professor Fotis Kafatos (European Molecular Biology Laboratory, Germany); and Professor Scott O’Neill (UQ).

Information: www.ice2004.org

HEALTH
Internet, media and mental health 2004 conference: April 21-24, Carlton Crest Hotel, Brisbane

Strong media representation, including stage and screen personalities, is expected at this event focused on overlaps between media and Internet; Internet and mental health; and mental health and the media. Ideas for symposia (90 minutes) plus abstracts for papers are welcomed.

Information: www.imh04.im.com.au, 07 3858 5416, stephanieg@im.com.au

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Community practitioner summer school: March 31-April 2, UQ Ipswich

The Community Service and Research Centre’s Community Practitioner Summer School is a comprehensive short course designed for community and economic development practitioners working in local government, community centres, community organisations and in state or federal initiatives. The summer school will be conducted by Jim Cavaye, one of Australia’s leading community development practitioners and educators. It will cover issues in community development using case studies and practitioner experiences from Australia and overseas.

Information: 07 4638 7722, cavaye@bigpond.com

TROPICAL HEALTH
Asia-Pacific forum on tropical health innovation: July 8-10, Cairns

This unique event will aim to define regional challenges and showcase new ventures in tropical health innovation. It will feature top innovators including Australian of the Year 2000, Sir Gustav Nossal and Pat Anderson, Chair CRC for Aboriginal Health, Australia.

Information: www.acithn.qimr.edu.au/asia-pacific/
Shiloh Moore's self-published Stranger in the Moving Chair is a series of 80 poems and 20 drawings about both despair and triumph. "There are poems about love and hope but importantly, they also express the loss of my abilities and passions in life," Ms Moore said.

She said one poem expressed her feelings of frustration with doctors who said she was simply experiencing growing pains.

At age 12, Ms Moore was diagnosed with fibromyalgia syndrome, which causes severe muscle pains, and chronic fatigue syndrome. She was forced to leave school in Year 10 due to complications and spent an entire year confined to her bed.

When she was finally able to leave her bed, she was wheelchair-bound for two years. Later she was also diagnosed with bipolar disorder. "The whole time I was in bed, I kept journals and wrote to myself to keep myself from going insane," she said.

Ms Moore continued writing after moving to her wheelchair. "At first I noticed how differently people treat you in a wheelchair, like little kids looking at you wide-eyed, and some people looking at you and feeling obvious pain," she said.

In 1997 and 1998, Ms Moore's poems were short-listed in the Nescafe Big Break and the title poem appeared in Dolly magazine. "At a church youth group one year a girl aged about 16 asked me whether I was the one whose poems appeared in Dolly magazine," Ms Moore said.

"I said ‘yes’ and then she told me that she loved the poem so much that she cut it out and used it to remind herself how lucky she was.” Ms Moore said she hoped her book would help other people who have similar chronic illnesses.

"When I was younger I used to read everything about my illnesses but it was all medical and there was nothing from the personal side," she said.

Ms Moore uses a mobility scooter provided by UQ’s Student Support Services Disability Program. Stranger in the Moving Chair is available through The Avid Reader Bookshop in Brisbane’s West End.
Righting human wrongs

UQ student Claire Mowry’s ambition to work on human rights issues has been fulfilled thanks to an internship with the Australian Mission to the United Nations (UN) in Geneva.

Ms Mowry, who left for Switzerland earlier this month, will spend the majority of her two month stay at the UN Commission on Human Rights, the world’s foremost human rights forum.

The internship, made possible with the support of UQ’s Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences and the School of Political Science and International Studies, was organised by international studies lecturer and President of the UN Association of Australia, Professor Margaret Reynolds.

Professor Reynolds travels to Geneva each year for the Commission on Human Rights.

While based in Geneva, Ms Mowry will work with delegates from the Australian Mission on a number of resolutions covering issues including racism and religion; occupied territories; the Middle East; Latin America; and women’s rights.

With her particular interest in women’s rights and racism and religion, Ms Mowry said she saw the exchange as an opportunity to learn more about the international community and the UN operations.

A Bachelor of Arts/Science student, Ms Mowry initially planned to become a doctor, however, after studying international relations she decided a combination of the two areas was the best path for her.

“Ideally I’d like to become a doctor and work for an organisation such as the World Health Organisation or the Red Cross,” she said.

“I’m particularly interested in women’s rights and health and human rights focusing on sanitation and disease.”

Head of the School of Political Science and International Studies Professor Paul Boreham said he was delighted the School had been able to arrange such a prestigious internship.

The school is networked with elite universities around the world and organises exchanges for PhD student Nicky Jones from the School of Languages and Comparative Cultural Studies; and the School of Law on the likely impact of research commercialisation and inflammatory diseases. CEO of IMBcom Dr Peter Isdale and IMB’s Deputy Director (Research), Professor Brandon Wainwright, hosted the visit.

• Other visitors to UQ during the month included the Ambassador for the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, His Excellency Mr Le Xuan Lieu, on February 16 and Adil Kahn, Chief of Branch, Socio-economic Governance and Management, Division of Public Administration with the United Nations on February 18.

The same day a delegation from the Mexican Ministry of Education visited the University, touring the Queensland Bioscience Precinct before attending a dinner at Customs House.

During February the University hosted several international visitors who met with staff and students.

• A forum entitled World Summit on the Information Society: how should the Smart State respond, featured a keynote address from UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, Dr Abdul Wahheed Khan.

The relevance of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) to Australia and their impact in Queensland was the focus of the forum held on February 19.

Dr Khan spoke about highlights from the World Summit on the Information Society held in Geneva in December and stressed the need for wider public debate on knowledge society.

• On February 6 a Japanese delegation, including the Consul General Takenori Yamazaki and Consul Yoshinari Suda of Japan in Queensland visited UQ’s Institute for Molecular Biodiversity (IMB). They attended a tour of the IMB and various seminars covering areas including research commercialisation and inflammatory diseases. CEO of IMBcom Dr Peter Isdale and IMB’s Deputy Director (Research), Professor Brandon Wainwright, hosted the visit.

• UQ Vice-Chancellor Professor John Hay, AC, and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International and Development) Professor Trevor Grigg hosted the Ambassador for the Republic of Hungary, His Excellency Lajos Fodor, on February 24. The Ambassador was accompanied by the Honorary Consul for the Republic of Hungary in Queensland Tibor Borlat.

Some of the stories that put UQ staff in the media

Economics

The Courier-Mail and The Advertiser (Adelaide) were among media quoting Associate Professor Tony Makin from the School of Economics in relation to the recent Free Trade Agreement.

Environment

The Sydney Morning Herald, The Age, and ABC Radio National were among media that ran stories about a report, co-authored by UQ’s Centre for Marine Studies Director Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg, on the biological, economic, and social threats of climate change on the Great Barrier Reef. Interviews with Professor Hoegh-Guldberg also received prominent coverage in the Japanese daily Asahi Shimbun and in New Scientist magazine.

Higher education

The Courier-Mail, The South West News and The Queensland Times reported on the various Orientation events taking place at the University.

Religion

ABC Radio National interviewed PhD student Nicky Jones from the School of Languages and Comparative Cultural Studies; and the School of Law on the likely impact on the Muslim community of France’s proposed secularism law, which was due for voting through the French National Assembly.

Library hours are available on the Library’s homepage at www.cybrary.uq.edu.au

UQ LIBRARY HOURS FOR 2004

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Concerts, special lectures, seminars and UQ events of general interest are published in this section. Entries, including date, time, contact name and telephone number, should be sent to c.saxby@uq.edu.au

SEMINARS

■ Wednesday, March 17
TC Beirne School of Law, The McIntyre Wilson Professional Legal Seminar series: to provide participants with an awareness of the general legal principles of insurance and a better understanding of commercial contracts in general. The Honourable Dr Des Derrington QC (8am, Customs House). Details: 07 3365 3498.

■ Friday, March 19
School of English, Media Studies and Art History, Aspects of historical-modern, regional art practices in relationship to the circulation and transformation of modernity and the emergence of new nation/new world nationalism, Ihor Holubizky, postgraduate student (1pm, Room 623, Therapies Bldg). Details: 07 3365 1412.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit, Neo-Darwinian selectionism, casualty and truth in the explanation of culture change, Dr Tom Loy (2pm, Room S603, Social Sciences Building). Details: 07 3365 2385.

School of Biomedical Sciences, Arresting angiotensin receptors, Dr Walter Thomas, Baker Medical Research Institute, Melbourne (1pm, Room 305, Skerman Bldg). Details: 07 3365 4066.

■ Monday, March 22
School of Biomedical Sciences, Membrane fusion in the secretory pathway, Professor Reinhard Jahn, Max-Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry, Germany (1pm, IMB Auditorium, Queensland Bioscience Precinct). Details: 07 3365 3506.

■ Friday, March 26
School of English, Media Studies and Art History, Presentation of a paper on Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa, Isabel D’Avila Winter, postgraduate student (1pm, Room 623, Therapies Bldg). Details: 07 3365 1412.

School of Languages and Comparative Cultural Studies, Internet relay chat and conversation analysis: dialogue, triologue, polylogue and beyond, Professor Roland Sussex (2pm, Room 208, Gordon Greenwood Bldg).

School of Biomedical Sciences, Zinc fingers in mouse and zebrafish organogenesis, Associate Professor Andrew Perkins (1pm, Room 305, Skerman Bldg). Details: 07 3365 4066.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit, Balancing cultural and nature conservation in Queensland’s protected areas: a Mill Point case study, Judy Powell (2pm, Room S603, Social Sciences Building). Details: 07 3365 2385.

■ Friday, April 2
School of English, Media Studies and Art History, Sex is a Nazi: Erodece and Embodiment in Les Murray, Bronwyn Lea, published poet and postgraduate student (1pm, Room 623, Therapies Bldg). Details: 07 3365 1412.

School of Biomedical Sciences, A unifying basis for auditory thresholds, Dr Peter Heil, Leibniz Institute for Neurobiology, Germany (1pm, Room 305, Skerman Bldg). Details: 07 3365 4066.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit, Gurus Island, West New Britain, Carol Lentfer (2pm, Room S603, Social Sciences Building). Details: 07 3365 2385.

Monday, April 5
School of Biomedical Sciences, Cortical control of neural stress responses, Sarah Spencer, postgraduate student (1pm, Room 305 Skerman Bldg).

Wednesday, April 7
Australasian Centre on Ageing, Breakfast Colloquio Series 2004, Life protracted or protracted woe, Dr Malcolm Parker (7:30am, Royal on the Park, Brisbane CBD, bookings essential). Details: 07 3346 9084.

School of Biomedical Sciences, An analysis: dilogue, trilogue, polylogue and Internet relay chat and conversation (12:30pm, Nickson Room, Zelman Cowen Bldg).

THURSDAY, APRIL 8
School of Music, Staff Club twilight concert, Miranda Carson (violin), Louise Cottone (violin), Alex Jameson (cello) and Kristine Healy (flute) (6pm, The Eleanor Room, Staff Club).

School of Music, Trio a Due, Felicitas Weyer and Almut Seebeck (12:30pm, Nickson Room, Zelman Cowen Bldg).

OTHER EVENTS

■ Friday, April 2
UQ SPORTS, Sunset scamper, fun run, a 5km twilight run/ walk (5:30pm, UQ Athletics Track). Details: 07 3365 6612.

CLASSIFIEDS

TO RENT/HOUSE SIT

■ Taringa: 4bd, 3bdrm hse with air-con, includes a self-contained flat, walk to shops and train, $500/wk. Lindsay: 0411 148 739 or lidkisson@bigli.com.au

■ Fig Tree Pocket: 4bd, 3bdrm hse with air-con, pool, close to schools and parklands, $600/wk. Diana at PRD: 0418 743 422.

■ Kenmore: 5bd, 3bdrm and study hse, close to shops, schools and University bus route, $/ft², $350/wk from July-Dec. Dennis: 07 3378 8532 or dr.popp@uq.edu.au

■ Point Lookout, Nth Stradbroke Island: 3bd hse, 1 queen & 4 single beds, CD player, TV, BBQ, dishwasher, washing machine/dryer, cls beaches, shops. Malcolm: 07 3365 5764, m.mclennan@uq.edu.au

■ Other events:

■ WANTED TO RENT/HOUSE SIT

■ Visiting academic needs f/ft² hse/unit near UQ July-Dec. Graham: 07 3365 4500, g.schaffer@minmet.uq.edu.au or Wojtek: wojtek@leu.edu

■ HOUSE EXCHANGE

■ Seeking 3bd accom. cls UQ St Lucia, Aug 2004 – July 2005. Will swap with 3bd house cls University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. Euan: euan_taylor@shaw.ca

■ Homestay

■ Toowong: family with large 6bd house, $/ft², includes broadband Internet and breakfast and dinner, $175 to $190 per week. Mia or Yousuf: 07 3316 3738, 07 3700 9394 or dileight01@hotmail.com

PRIZES

■ WH and HW Harris Bursary 2004: for a female student who attended a Queensland secondary school in 2002 and is a lineal descendant of a person eligible to be accepted as a member of the War Widows Guild, Australia, Queensland Branch. Worth: $750 per annum for three years. Closing: March 19. Information: 07 3365 1984.


■ The General Staff Prize 2004: for a member of staff with a period or periods of full-time service totalling three years who graduated in the previous calendar year and who, in the opinion of the Vice-Chancellor’s nominee, achieved the best results throughout that degree. Worth: $380 (books). Closing: March 31. Information: 07 3365 1984.

■ Cotton Industry Medical Scholarship: for a second-year medical student to assist with costs associated with his/her studies. In return, the student will be required to spend three weeks in the first year and then two weeks in each of the following two years on a rural placement in a cotton-growing region during University holidays. The NSW Rural Doctors Network administers the scholarship. Worth: $5000 per annum for three years. Closing: April 2. Information: www.nswrdn.com.au

■ The RD Arida Bursary 2004: for students who have undertaken no previous study at tertiary level and whose home residence is in Charters Towers City or one of the shires of Dalrymple, Flinders or Cloncurry. Closing: April 8. Information: 07 3365 1984.

The Mongolian gazelle – at risk from poachers with semi-automatic weapons – has a new set of allies in the form of Australian kangaroo experts.

UQ researchers Professor Gordon Grigg and Dr Tony Pople are among five Australian experts in kangaroo harvesting and management who are sharing their knowledge in a push to conserve the gazelle species.

“The Mongolian Gazelle is one of the last large migratory ungulates, living on Mongolia’s Eastern Steppes, one of the world’s largest intact grasslands,” Professor Grigg said.

“A combination of subsistence use and illegal poaching for ‘quick and dirty’ sale across the borders to China and Russia are causing a decline in gazelles.

“We were told that much of the illegal ‘harvest’ is taken with AK-47 assault rifles and Kalashnikov sub-machine guns, and that the poachers are not necessarily Mongolians.

“The undressed carcasses, frozen by night time winter conditions, are sold for $4-5 each, with much waste because of the unsatisfactory handling.

“In contrast, properly field-dressed carcasses could sell in Mongolia’s capital Ulanbaatar for $30-$35, so the country is missing out both financially and in conservation terms.

“There is plenty of legislation. The thinking is that if people in control can ensure compliance with the legislation, there will be a better future for the species.”

An American non-Government organisation, the Wildlife Conservation Society, approached the Australians to discuss the situation first hand at a workshop on gazelle harvesting and conservation in Ulanbaatar sponsored by the Society.

“The Society’s idea was to implement a regulated, hygienically conducted and sustainable harvest, increasing the economic value of gazelles locally to provide a stimulus for their conservation,” Professor Grigg said.

“The Society looked towards Australia, with our good track record in managing a sustainable kangaroo harvest, as a source of expertise.”

Dr Pople and Professor Grigg were selected for their expertise in population monitoring and quota setting and because of their advocacy for achieving conservation objectives through the sustainable use of wildlife.

Professor Grigg said as the conference presentation unfolded, it became clear that any harvest at this stage would be premature.

He said there was little information on total Mongolian gazelle population numbers and that what there was suggested the population was declining.

“Accordingly the Australian contingent recommended that there be no harvest for the time being, that poaching should be brought under control, and that a good monitoring program be developed and introduced, preferably by aerial survey,” he said.

Dr Pople and Professor Grigg, who are involved with one of the world’s longest running aerial fauna surveys, of kangaroos in the South Australian arid pastoral zone, have offered to assist with the aerial survey.

“Once the surveys show an increasing gazelle population, a cautious harvest could be implemented, ‘value added’ by using best practice in field harvesting and dressing and transport,” Professor Grigg said.

After the conference the Australians spent several days on a field study tour on the Western Steppes, observing both the lifestyle and grazing management practices.

They met nomadic herdpeople of sheep and goats and stayed in gers or yurts, tents made of felt and canvas on a wooden frame, the traditional homes to half of the country’s 2.4 million population.

Several families were on the move from summer to winter pastures, with their possessions piled high on carts.

The Australians sampled Mongolian cuisine, including yak cheese and butter, horse intestine dumplings and fermented mare’s milk.

Images of Mongolia. PHOTOS: courtesy Professor Grigg