

TOWER



SPRING 2014
ISSUE 11

NEW LEADERSHIP

Vice-Chancellor
Attila Brungs
shares his vision
for a thriving UTS

THE 2014 AWARD ALUMNI WINNERS

Meet this year's
highest achievers in
the UTS community

BUILDING THE FUTURE FASTER

UTS's Data Arena
opens new possibilities in
science and engineering

THE NEW SILK ROAD

From Sydney
to Shanghai –
our expanding
partnership
with China

THE VALUES behind our vision



I have recently been reflecting on UTS's values: discover, empower, engage, deliver, sustain.

AS THE NEW VICE CHANCELLOR, I FEEL honoured to have succeeded Professor Ross Milbourne who leaves us a fantastic legacy. We are extremely well placed to succeed in a dramatically changing higher education sector in this country.

I have recently been reflecting on UTS's values: discover, empower, engage, deliver, sustain. There is a great deal of power in these words. Our community shares a strong commitment to excellence, social justice, equity and quality education; our 180,000 alumni contribute enormously to that vision.

As global ambassadors, your achievements continue to build the university's international reputation for shaping entrepreneurial and influential graduates.

I am looking forward to engaging closely with you as we build on this great momentum towards the university's strategic vision – to become a world-leading university of technology. ■■

Professor Attila Brungs, Vice-Chancellor

TOWER

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Download the latest issue of *TOWER* Magazine from the App Store (for iPad) or Google Play (for Android devices).

The new Silk Road

From Sydney to Shanghai – our expanding partnership with China

STORY BY MELINDA HAM

As China looms large on the international stage as one of the world's most substantial economies, it is timely for Australia to assess its bilateral relationship with this burgeoning superpower.

It is of particular importance to UTS, which has numerous links to China through research and cultural exchange. According to Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice President (International and Advancement) Bill Purcell, UTS will have an important role to play in “building an Asia-literate and language-capable nation that will be able to effectively take up the opportunities provided by the Asian century.”

To delve deeper into this complex bilateral relationship and explore its political, economic and strategic ramifications further, UTS has just opened the Australia China Relations Institute (ACRI), the first think-tank of its kind in the country, dedicated solely to this relationship. Former foreign minister

and former NSW premier, Bob Carr, has been appointed as ACRI's inaugural director.

The establishment of ACRI was made possible by the generous donations of Chinese philanthropists and entrepreneurs, Xiangmo Huang and Chulong Zhou.

“We share a vision to produce high-quality research that will have worthwhile results for both our countries' relationships in important business and societal spheres,” said Mr Huang, whose company Yuhu Group is heavily involved in real estate management, energy and agriculture

While China may be much more important to Australia than Australia is to China in economic and strategic terms, our two countries have enjoyed an extensive two-way trading relationship worth over \$150 billion in 2013 alone. A free trade agreement between the two countries is currently in discussion. ▶

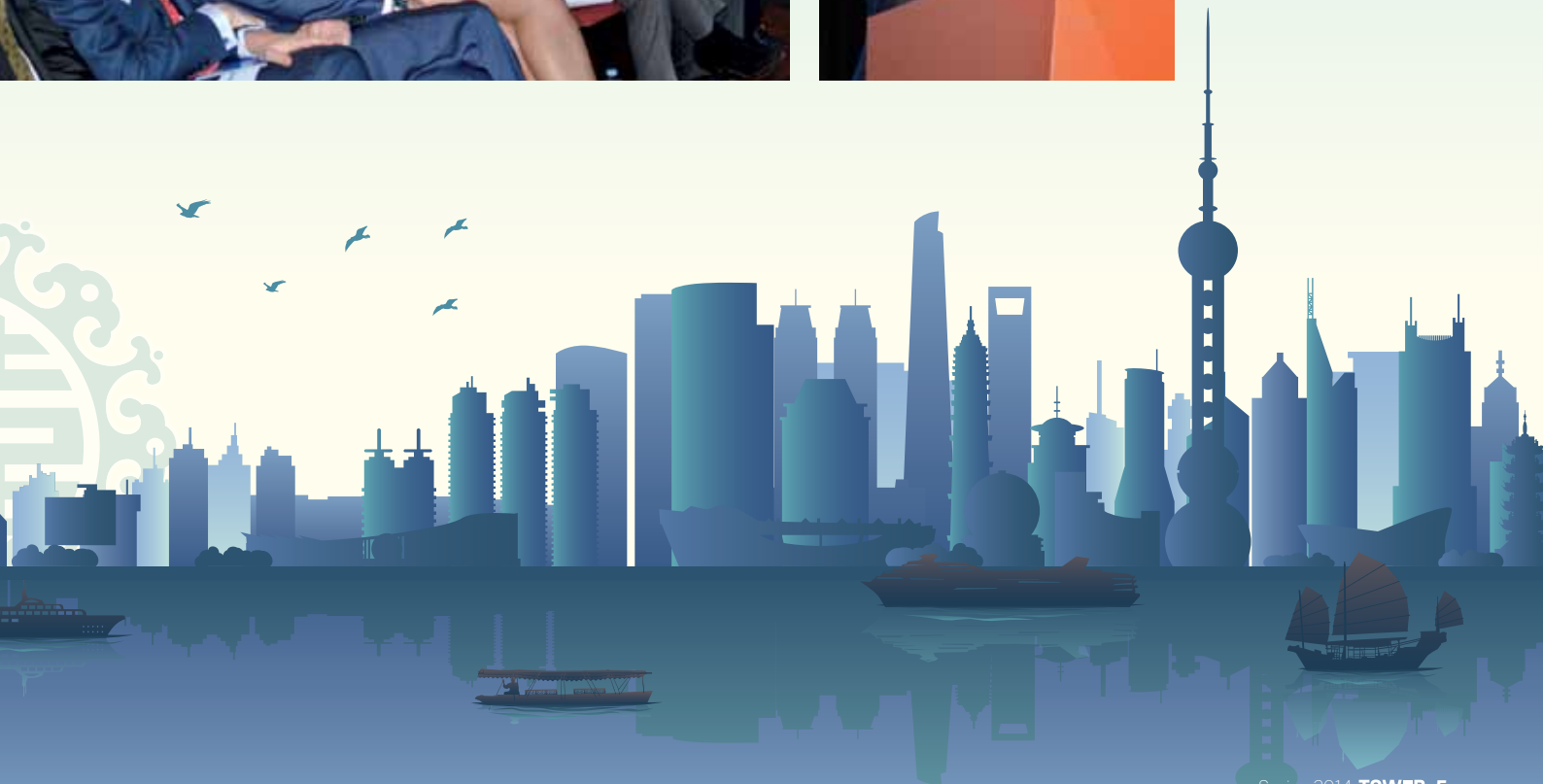




Photos: Terry Clinton



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP TO LEFT: ACRI Director, the Hon Bob Carr; Foreign Minister, the Hon Julie Bishop; Chinese Ambassador to Australia, Ma Zhaoxu; Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Tanya Plibersek; at the official launch of ACRI.



“Our role will be to illuminate the Australia-China relationship, as it is very poorly understood.”

PROFESSOR JAMES LAURENCESON

Chinese technology partners

One of the ways UTS is building relationships with China is by developing Key Technology Partnerships with five of its top universities; Beijing Institute of Technology (BIT), Shanghai University (SHU), Huazong University of Science and Technology (HUST) and Sun-Yat Sen University (SYSU).

These partnerships involve developing extensive research links, student exchanges, fellowships and dual PhDs. UTS has also established joint research centres with other top Chinese universities, including Tsinghua University, SHU, Jiaotong University, and the prestigious Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Hong PolyU and UTS have collaborated since 1993 in teaching and research in applied linguistics, nursing, design engineering and IT – while SHU and UTS established the joint SHU-UTS SILC Business School.

SHU and UTS also enjoy shared research interests in design, science, engineering and urban social studies, while SYSU collaborates with UTS on bio medical devices, clinical trials and commercialisation.

Chinese students are also the largest cohort of international students in Australian higher education institutions, with 119,000 enrolled last year, accounting for more than 40 per cent. of international students in Australia. Also, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, China is Australia’s second most significant source of tourists, with 709,000 Chinese holidaying here in 2013.

From China’s perspective, Australia is China’s second most important destination for outbound direct investment, just fractionally behind the US, with more than \$57 billion of accumulated investment coming into Australia since 2005, according to a recent report on the topic by KPMG.

“ACRI is a cockpit, anchored in UTS, able to look at these questions closely,” Carr says. “At ACRI, we would be predisposed to take a positive look at the relationship and the benefits to both sides. But it will also be about problem solving and confidence building

BELOW, FROM LEFT: PhD candidate Ming-ming Cheng; CCTV-News’s Cheng Lei at the 2014 Beijing Reunion; KPMG Asia Pacific COO Geoff Wilson at the 2014 Hong Kong reunion; attendees at the 2014 Hong Kong reunion



for both parties, to develop the strategic partnership further.”

While ACRI will take a multi-disciplinary approach to research, Carr says they will not shy away from thorny dimensions of the relationship such as human rights. One of his most vital accomplishments in his 18 months as foreign minister was to secure an annual leadership dialogue on this issue between the two countries.

During his decade as premier (from 1995 - 2005), Carr also built a wide-reaching network of business and political contacts within China and in the Australian-Chinese community here.

Joining him in Sydney at the end of the year is ACRI's deputy director, Professor James Laurenceson, an expert in the Chinese economy, who'll be coming fresh from a 12-year stint at the University of Queensland.

“Our role will be to illuminate the Australia-China relationship, as it is very poorly understood,” he says. “My main hope is that ACRI will become the main go-to source for comment for government, media and corporates for our unique, niche analysis.”

To this end, ACRI will use UTS' expertise in data analysis and choice modelling to look at political, economic and social beliefs in both China and Australia, to break down misconceptions about the relationship on both sides. ■■



ABOVE: ACRI deputy director Professor James Laurenceson

Chinese students at UTS

24-year-old PhD candidate Mingming Sheng left his hometown in Central China less than a year ago to come to UTS. He is one of more than 4,000 Chinese students enrolled in UTS.

“The business faculty have really helped us to be committed to our study,” says Sheng. “I have three supervisors who are experts in my area. This gives me a unique advantage to develop my own expertise and skills.”

Zhibiao Zhong is another Chinese student at UTS, enrolled in a Master of Business in Professional Accounting, who came from Guangzhou to study in Australia.

“UTS is quite famous in China for business courses,” the 30-year-old student says. “Many of my friends had also studied in New Zealand but I preferred to be in the middle of a big city environment.”

His favourite aspect of his MBA is its relevance to real life.

“What I am learning now will be useful to be when I start work in six months or a year's time.”

UTS's China alumni

UTS has more than 20,000 alumni scattered across China, and each year UTS hosts overseas graduation ceremonies in Shanghai and Hong Kong, in addition to various alumni reunions.

This year, a record 600 alumni attended events in these cities as well as Beijing, with attendance increasing more than 50 per cent from 2011.

Cheng Lei, presenter of BizAsia on CCTV, spoke candidly at the Beijing event about the challenges journalists face in China, while Geoff Wilson, KPMG Asia Pacific's chief operating officer, spoke at the Hong Kong reunion about diversity, gender equity and making a difference in the community.



Photos: supplied

New leadership

Vice-Chancellor Professor Attila Brungs shares his vision of UTS and how he'll translate it into reality.

STORY BY STEVE MEACHAM
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN CHEUNG

I must be one of the most fortunate Vice-Chancellors in Australia," admits Professor Attila Brungs who took over the top executive position at UTS from Professor Ross Milbourne in July. "At a time when higher education is changing so much in Australia, we've just built a campus for the future."

"I'm not a Vice-Chancellor stuck with lecture halls built 50 years ago. We've been able to design our campus (based) on the latest trends in teaching and learning to give our students experiences they'd never get anywhere else."

Professor Brungs doesn't take any credit for the \$1.2 billion transformation, praising Milbourne, Chancellor Professor Vicki Sara and the UTS Council for "their incredible vision" in doubling the size of the campus. But as the construction work draws to an end, it presents Brungs with a brand new challenge.

"The buildings are great, but what the buildings enable us to do is even greater," says the 42 year old Rhodes Scholar and former research scientist.

"Some people believe online course work is the death of universities. I don't believe that at all. But we have to use it in a sophisticated manner. Rather than have a lecture, how do we have an interaction in the lecture room?"

"In the master plan, we have not built one traditional lecture theatre. We now have much

more collaborative spaces, with rotating chairs and big desks. Students listen to the lecturer, get some group work, turn around and work with their peers. There's multi-media technology all through these buildings so how do we get the best use out of it? My role here at UTS is to make sure that happens.

"At UTS, we have always been in the forefront of teaching and learning and educational experiences. Let's make sure we are world-leading in the future."

When the Chancellor announced his appointment in December, Professor Sara said "Attila's imagination, passion and commitment set him apart" against "intense national and international competition" and praised his "bold vision" for the future of UTS.

So what is his vision? Making sure UTS becomes one of the finest universities of technology in the world, he says. "In one recent ranking, we're in the top 250 in the world. That's fantastic. But I want to be up there with MIT and Imperial College, London. How do we get into that realm? That's going to take 10 or 15 years.

"We've come a long way in our 25 year history and, in the last ten years under Ross, we've taken a huge step jump. Now we need another one or two step jumps to get into that top league."

Rather than setting targets to achieve that result, Professor Brungs says "it's more about the



A portrait of Professor Attila Brungs, a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a white shirt, a blue vest, and a striped tie. He is standing with his arms crossed against a wood-paneled wall. The image is framed by a white border at the top and a blue arrow on the left side.

“We’ve been able to design our campus [based] on the latest trends in teaching and learning to give our students experiences they’d never get anywhere else.”

Vice-Chancellor Professor Attila Brungs joined UTS in 2009 as Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research).

characteristics I want us to have". The world's top universities "have this unremitting focus on excellence", he says. "The good thing is that we already have excellence across UTS. What I'd like to do is make it ubiquitous and almost unconscious."

In part, that means "focusing on what we are very good at", and ensuring that those subjects are taught with innovation and creativity. "I don't want us to copy what other universities do. As we get bigger, I don't want us to become a bland, broad university."

He cites education, science, engineering, design, architecture and building as among UTS strengths, but points out they are lots of courses within those disciplines which the university doesn't offer. "Those we do pick, we do very, very well. We have to be very distinctive in what we do so that when people graduate from UTS, everyone knows they've chosen the best in their field."

For most of his career, Professor Brungs has been involved in research, either as an academic or in managerial positions. He was a senior manager at McKinsey and Co before joining CSIRO in 2002 as general manager, science investment, strategy and performance. In 2009, he came to UTS as Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) which gave him general oversight of the University's research activities, postgraduate education, industry liaison, intellectual property and commercialisation.

It's a far cry from the research scientist he intended to be when he left Oxford University with a PhD in inorganic chemistry. Does he ever miss being on the front line of research? "Absolutely. There's an excitement about constructing an experiment and getting an answer you didn't expect. But I made a conscious choice about how I could best use my talents. I can guarantee that there are hundreds of thousands of researchers better than I am. So I'm very happy with my choice."

He's married to scientist-turned-artist Kate Gradwell. They live in Sydney's Northern Beaches with their two young children, Eleanor and William – both of whom have inherited his love of archery and the sabre which he learnt from his Hungarian grandfather.

At 190 cms tall and with a penchant for three piece suits, Professor Brungs cuts a distinctive figure as he strolls around campus, which he likes to do often.

"A university is a vibrant place," he explains. "Sometimes, when life gets really busy, you forget why you're here. Then you wander around the campus and you know why. You feel the student buzz." ■■



Professor Brungs will be representing Australia at the 2014 Commonwealth Veteran Championships in the Men's Sabre in Largs, Scotland in November.

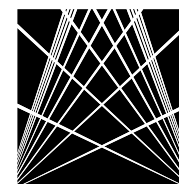
A VENUE WITH ALL THE OPTIONS

Situated on the edge of the Sydney CBD, Aerial UTS Function Centre is within close proximity of all forms of transport including Central Station, light rail, Sydney buses and the Sydney airport.

Featuring modern, flexible spaces Aerial can be tailored to suit your individual needs. Whether you require an intimate meeting space for 20 or a large sweeping space for 400 the centre is able to accommodate.

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- Rooms featuring natural light
- Expansive balcony access
- Views of the Sydney CBD and ANZAC Bridge
- Extensive menus and package deals



aerial
UTS FUNCTION CENTRE

The TOWERING 10

Meet our inspirational 2014
UTS Alumni Award winners,
each with a reputation for
excellence within their chosen

STORY BY JENIFER WATERS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN CHEUNG



Dr Simon Walsh **UTS Alumni Award for Excellence – Faculty of Science** **Chancellor’s Award for Excellence** *Doctor of Philosophy in Science, 2009*

AS AUSTRALIA’S LEADING DISASTER VICTIM identification (DVI) expert, Simon Walsh has brought comfort to countless grieving families, allowing them to begin the process of laying their loved ones to rest.

In his capacity as National DVI Commander with the Australian Federal Police (AFP), his leadership and expertise have been crucial to the success of numerous high-profile DVI operations, amongst them the Victorian bushfires in 2009, the Christmas Island refugee boat tragedies in 2010 and 2012, and the Christchurch earthquake in New Zealand in 2011.

The horror of the Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17 tragedy in July triggered his next deployment. Leading a team of Australian specialists to the war-ravaged field in the Ukraine, Walsh began the grizzly process of recovering and identifying the victims’ remains under Operation Bring Them Home.

As Chief Scientist, Forensics for the AFP, Walsh is widely regarded as one of the nation’s foremost forensic authorities...

As Chief Scientist, Forensics for the AFP, Walsh is widely regarded as one of the nation’s foremost forensic authorities and has led reforms and initiatives that significantly expand our capabilities in the field. He’s also been a pivotal part of capacity-building programs elsewhere in the region.

A passionate contributor to forensic science research and education, Walsh’s extraordinary research output runs to two specialised international textbooks, over 20 book chapters, and some 200 articles and conference papers. He also developed Australia’s first bachelor degree in forensic biology at UTS, while working towards his own Doctor of Philosophy in Forensic Science (2009).



Rebecca Cooper and Bridget Yorston **UTS Alumni Award for Excellence – Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building** *Bachelor of Design Fashion & Textiles (Hons), 2004*

WHEN REBECCA COOPER AND BRIDGET YORSTON SPARKED up a friendship on their first day as undergraduate students, it was the start of something beautiful. Just two years into their Bachelor of Design (Fashion and Textiles) degree, their friendship evolved into the fashion label Bec & Bridge.

Bec & Bridge has gone from strength to strength. Picked up by David Jones in 2006, expansion into the overseas market came a few short years later. Now, the Bec & Bridge label boasts a cache of local and international celebrity followers, including Taylor Swift, Miranda Kerr, Nicole Ritchie and Eva Longoria all seen sporting their designs.

“Sometimes we’re still taken aback by seeing such iconic figures wearing our clothes and the incredible power of celebrity does impact sales,” says Cooper.

And with US department store giants such as Bloomingdales, Harvey Nicholls, Saks and Neiman Marcus already stocking the brand, the stage is set for big things for Cooper and Yorsten. ●



Richard Tamba

**UTS Alumni Award for Excellence
– Faculty of Engineering and
Information Technology**
*Bachelor of Engineering
(Mechanical Engineering), 1988*

ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST INFLUENTIAL ENGINEERS, Richard Tamba founded Nautitech and established offices in Europe, Asia and the US. Today, he focuses on the ASEAN region for AVL, to whom he sold his company.

Graduating with a Bachelor of Engineering (Mechanical Engineering) in 1998, Tamba is author of over 50 patents, and his adaptation of dual-clutch transmission (DCT) technology to passenger cars is now industry standard worldwide. Tamba is also a passionate ambassador for Australian innovation in the world market and a strong advocate for education. He's giving back by providing training and advice on a pro bono basis to start-ups and established companies, and mentoring CEOs.



Jemma Birrell

**UTS Alumni Award for
Excellence – Faculty of
Arts and Social Science**
*BA Comm (1999), BA
(Hons) Comm (2003)*

Birrell's fresh vision and unique programming has taken the 2014 Sydney Writers' Festival to new heights, breaking all records for ticketing.

JEMMA BIRRELL SPENT SEVEN YEARS IN PARIS AT world famous bookshop Shakespeare and Company as their first ever events director. She rubbed shoulders with the likes of Alain de Botton and Martin Amis, before landing the job of artistic director for the Sydney Writers' Festival.

"The Festival brings together some of the most interesting people from Australia and around the world," says Birrell. "The writing community here is so rich."

Now in her second year in the role, Birrell's fresh vision and unique programming has taken the 2014 Sydney Writers' Festival to new heights, breaking all records for ticketing, book sales, audience

numbers and geographic reach. With 450 writers and 350 events across 60 venues, her program attracts and inspires a more diverse audience than ever before.

Graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication (Hons) in 2003, Birrell started out in Australian publishing before heading to Paris. At Shakespeare and Company, she developed a world-renowned literary program presenting leading authors, thinkers and musicians, and co-directed three editions of the Festival and Co.

"I'm currently planning the program for the next Sydney Writers' Festival, trying to tempt some of the most stimulating people from around the world to come and take part," she says.



Leona McGrath

UTS Alumni Award for Excellence – Faculty of Health

Bachelor of Midwifery, 2009

TAKING ON MATURE-AGE STUDY AS A SINGLE MOTHER, Leona McGrath overcame significant obstacles to become one of the first Aboriginal graduates of the Bachelor of Midwifery in 2009. Her own childbirth experiences were a key motivator. “I believe I would have had a more rewarding experience if there’d been another [indigenous] face in the clinic, or better still, whilst giving birth,” she shares.

After four years as a midwife in the Malabar Community Midwifery Practice, a service specifically for Aboriginal women, she was actively recruited by NSW Health to lead the ministry’s strategy.

In just over two years she’s made a significant impact, further developing initiatives within NSW Health to increase the Aboriginal nursing and midwifery workforce.

“I hope that my story will encourage other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to believe that if they have the passion, they too can become what they want,” she says.

Margaret Cunneen SC

UTS Alumni Award for Excellence – Faculty of Law

Bachelor of Laws, 1982

IN A CAREER SPANNING MORE THAN 30 years, Margaret Cunneen has earned a reputation as one of the country’s most respected champions of the rights of sexual assault victims.

Cunneen worked as a legal clerk while studying for her Bachelor of Laws (1982) at what was then the NSW Institute of Technology (NSWIT), part of the first cohort of students in the Faculty of Law.

A post with the Public Service Board’s Legal Branch followed, before joining the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. She took silk, appointed Senior Counsel in 2007.

More recently, she’s been firmly engrossed in her role as Commissioner of the NSW Special Commission of Inquiry into matters relating to the police investigation of certain child sexual abuse allegations in the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. ▶



“I started Law at NSWIT the same day I started work in the NSW Attorney General’s Department.”



Jacqui Feeney

**UTS Alumni Award for Excellence –
UTS Business School**
Grad Dip Business Administration, 2000

THIS YEAR JACQUI FEENEY WAS APPOINTED managing director of Fox International Channels (FIC) in Australia and New Zealand. She oversees all aspects of the company's operations in the region, covering programming, marketing, advertising sales, finance and regulation, as well as management of affiliate partner relationships.

Feeney's early experience focused on content development and she sees her Graduate Diploma in Business Administration (2000) as a pivot point. "I moved my career from being about films and programs – the creative side I was originally so interested in – to focus on embracing what has become a specialty for me: the business and strategic direction of content," she explains.

Feeney also finds time to encourage social philanthropy, serving on industry boards – including the Documentary Foundation of Australia.

Father Peter Maher

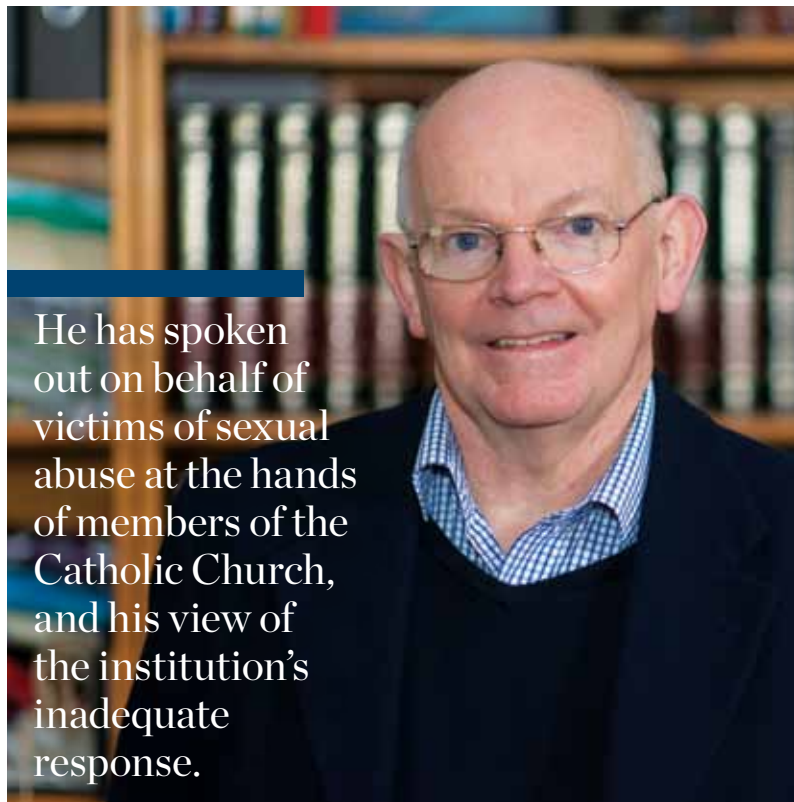
OAM

Alumni Community Award
*Master of Education
(Adult Education), 2001*

A VOCAL ADVOCATE FOR GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, transsexual and intersex rights, Father Peter Maher has spoken out on behalf of victims of sexual abuse at the hands of members of the Catholic Church. He's also provided support and pastoral care to people following abortion experiences, and is a long-serving member of the Aboriginal Justice Support Group.

It's a labour of love that he is keen to inspire in others. "I take inspiration from what I term a political reading of the bible," Maher explains. "There are lessons in moving the marginalised to the fore, making their plight more visible."

As Chaplain with Palms Australia, he enables volunteers to build capacity within communities in Africa, Asia and the Pacific. He also co-founded the Benedict Barkat Foundation in support of children's education in Pakistan, and is a National Board Member of InterPlay Australia.



He has spoken out on behalf of victims of sexual abuse at the hands of members of the Catholic Church, and his view of the institution's inadequate response.



Lihua Tong is a leading global advocate for the rights of children, women and migrant workers.

Lihua Tong

International Alumni Award

Master of Laws, 2004

IN 1999, THE PUBLIC INTEREST LAWYER USED HIS personal funds to establish the Beijing Children's Legal Aid and Research Centre, the first non-government organisation (NGO) dedicated to providing pro bono legal services to children in the People's Republic of China.

Tong expanded operations to include legal assistance to migrant workers and women in China, later adding the protection of farmers' rights and environmental issues to the portfolio. Operating under the new name Zhicheng Public Interest Lawyers, more than 400,000 children and migrant workers have already benefited from his work.

Tong leads by example, encouraging other lawyers in China to take on pro bono work. But perhaps even more remarkable is the support he garnered from Chinese authorities for establishing an independent legal NGO dedicated to helping a sizeable section of the population whose voices would otherwise go unheard.

"I was born in a poor village and have insight into the lives of vulnerable groups in China," he recalls. "In these times of rapid growth in China, we need to increase our efforts to address the continued disadvantage of such groups.

Chris Zaharia

Young Alumni Award

Bachelor of Business Bachelor of Science in Information Technology, 2010

ZAHARIA'S ACHIEVEMENTS AT JUST 26 YEARS OF AGE are extraordinary. Within a year of graduating he co-founded Zookal, an innovative business model that rents textbooks to Australian university students. Under his guidance, Zookal has built and scaled its technology to service over ten thousand students and generated revenues in excess of one million dollars.

Through his research in virtual reality and neuroscience technologies for education, Zaharia designed and built a world-first simulation enabling users to navigate a virtual environment with their mind.

Perhaps key to Zaharia's success is his blending of technical skill, creative innovation and strong business acumen. "I take a view on things from both a technological and commercial viewpoint," he says.

He's sharing that expertise freely to help out start-up ventures in need of guidance. "The help we received from the local business and technology communities was vital," says Zaharia, "and I'm glad to be in a position to pass it on." ■■



Simulate *this*

From virtual time travel to dynamic manipulation, the UTS Data Arena will change the way we interact with data.

STORY BY JENIFER WATERS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN CHEUNG



Imagine you could stand in a room in Ultimo, and at the same time be shivering in an Antarctic snowstorm as the landscape morphs in response to climate change.

This is just one of many applications envisioned for the UTS Data Arena, a 360-degree interactive data visualisation facility set to open soon.

“It’s not just about vision and sound – it’s a truly immersive environment, a more human interaction with data,” Professor Hung Nguyen, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and IT, explains.

“For example, if we’re modelling the potential impact of varying levels of carbon emissions, we’re not just showing you melting icebergs. We can drop the temperature in the room, and generate wind and snow – even the scent of the ocean.”

While the concept of visual and auditory feedback in interactive data visualisation already exists, these additional effects – which run to fog, mist, aromas and lighting effects – is what sets the UTS Data Arena apart.

“We’re essentially blurring physical and virtual reality,” adds Professor Nguyen.

Located in the new UTS Engineering and IT Building on Broadway, the Data Arena will give researchers an opportunity to bring their data to life, seeing and interpreting it in ways that are sure to inspire and excite them.

By aggregating data from any kind of digital device – from mobile phones to transport cards and fitness apps – researchers can work visually with industries to find patterns and solve problems. The implications on fields such as health care, transport planning, the arts, social sciences and more are incredibly broad-reaching. “Put simply, it’s very hard to understand a spreadsheet if you’re just looking at numbers,” explains Ben Simons, lead developer on the project. “Representing that data as imagery through animation and sonification allows us to see not just the state of the data, but how it’s changing. We can explore the data set, and move around in it.”

“Sound often seems one-dimensional, but in the Data Arena we have 14 speakers around the circle,” says Simons. “We can actually place the sound where the object is.”

Six 3D-stereo video projectors blend the image for a seamless three-dimensional panorama.

“We’re essentially blurring physical and virtual reality.”

PROFESSOR HUNG NGUYEN, DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AND IT.



**SEE THE VIDEO
ON THE TOWER
MAGAZINE APP**

Behind these, six computers work in tandem, their workload shared through the use of Equalizer – open source software initially developed in Switzerland and used in the Blue Brain Project, where scientists are reconstructing a virtual brain in a supercomputer for deeper understanding of the brain and of neurological diseases.

This is another one of the unique features of the facility: using open source software. This means users are at liberty to take the fundamentals of the existing source code and tailor it to their own purposes. That effectively makes the Data Arena a living organism.

“There are developers all around the world constantly improving and modifying the source code, so there’s daily updates,” says Simons. “It’s truly collaborative.”

Part of the open source agreement is that any changes to the source code are shared. “From a pedagogical point of view this is brilliant, because if we have a student that wants to drill down into a particular area, all the source code is there. They can learn how it works and modify it, improve it, and pass that back into the community.”

“It’s almost a philosophy, a movement in software.”

It has even captured the imagination of Sydney-based visual effects studio, Animal Logic, which is producing a short film to showcase the Data Arena’s incredible capabilities.

The Data Arena presents an unparalleled opportunity for UTS to enhance its own research capabilities across a broad range of disciplines – everything from mapping the path of parasitic bacteria to fashion design – as well as that of its industry and government partners.

Simons and his team are working on data pipelines – essentially templates that users can download, then substitute their own data so it can be transformed to geometry and visualised in the Data Arena. He says this user-oriented access, rather than relying on ‘gatekeepers’ of the technology to facilitate each stage of the project, means the potential for scaling is enormous.

“It’s the difference between a shop and a supermarket. Rather than waiting in line to be served one person at a time, each person can take all their ingredients straight to the checkout – the Data Arena – to visualise it.” ■■

**FROM FAR LEFT:
Ben Simons at the
controls of the Data
Arena; the computers
that control the
Data Arena projec-
tors; the 3D stereo
video projectors of
the Data Arena.**

On the fringes of power

How a political career led a UTS alumna from Malcolm Turnbull to Hillary Clinton.

STORY BY STEVE MEACHAM

Nina Blackwell's schoolgirl ambition wasn't typical. She had no desire to become a model or a vet, a doctor or a TV star. "Even as a girl I wanted to be a human rights lawyer," she laughs down the phone from her home in California. "So this job is a dream come true."

Since the beginning of 2013, the UTS alumna has played a key role in shaping the future of Humanity United, a US-based human rights foundation "dedicated to building world peace, ending genocide and modern-day slavery, and advancing the causes of human freedom".

But her career has followed a circular route. Along the way, she earned her spurs in NSW politics, worked alongside Malcolm Turnbull to press the case for an Australian republic, laboured night and day for Democrat candidates in the crucible of New York elections, and served in a senior executive role for Yahoo! Inc.

That's not even mentioning the seven years she worked for Hillary Clinton – former First Lady, US Senator, presidential candidate, Barak Obama's first Secretary of State, and still a possibility to become the first woman elected US President.

Her close relationship with Clinton – first as special advisor and then as press secretary and spokesperson – came in the aftermath of Osama Bin Laden's attack on the World Trade Centre, which had a deep impact on Blackwell both personally and professionally (see next page).



ABOVE: Blackwell studied law at UTS while working for the Australian Republican Movement with Malcolm Turnbull.

Born in Sydney on 30 April 1972 and educated at SCECGS Redlands in Neutral Bay, Blackwell went to the University of NSW intending to study psychology and biology. "But I fell completely in love with politics at university," she explains. That interest naturally transferred to the politics of the real world, "the idea you could impact public policy and make people's lives better was fundamentally appealing".

Leaving UNSW with a Masters in Political Science in 1993, she started work in the NSW Parliament, initially for a Liberal politician and later for the Australian Democrats.

In 1996, around the time she began working for the Australian Republican Movement as national campaign manager under chairman Malcolm Turnbull, Blackwell enrolled at UTS to study at night for a Bachelor of Law.

She looks back at her time at UTS as "an extraordinary life experience", relishing "the merger of experience and ideas" that came from studying with other committed professionals from a diverse range of careers. Though she found she could apply some of the legal knowledge she had

acquired in the NSW Parliament, “what I liked most was the capacity to explore other interests totally outside my experience such as human rights law and constitutional law” – precisely the areas she deals with now as head of external affairs at Humanity United.

“They were pretty sleepless years, so much work and so much study,” recalls the passionate republican. “It was an honour being at the epicentre of a pivotal moment in Australian history and it was a really reflective time too, understanding who we are as a nation, where we want to go, and how we want to structure our future.”

Ultimately, Australians voted against becoming a republic in the 1999 referendum. “Heartbreaking,” she says. “But we all benefitted from having that national conversation.” Turnbull remains a close friend.

When Mark Solomons, her then boyfriend, was offered a job in New York in 2000, Blackwell went with him: they were married the following year.

With no green card, she volunteered for the Democrats. Soon she was working seven days a week, for election campaigns including Senator

“Hillary was still the serving First Lady and only came into the media office once while I was there. It was like meeting your hero.”

Bill Bradley’s unsuccessful attempt to become the Democrat candidate in the 2000 Presidential race and Hillary Clinton’s victorious bid to become the first female Senator for New York the same year.

The first time she met Clinton was during that campaign. “Hillary was still the serving First Lady and only came into the media office once while I was there. It was like meeting your hero.”

Their paths crossed again early in 2002. At just 29, Blackwell was invited to a New York hotel to meet the Senator who was looking for a special advisor.

“I was very nervous,” Blackwell remembers. In fact, she felt she froze and had blown a once in a lifetime opportunity. Later Clinton told Blackwell she hadn’t noticed how tongue-tied the Australian had been.

Over the next seven years, Blackwell became Hillary’s press secretary and spokesperson, growing closer to Clinton than any other Australian. The situation became even more intense after Clinton entered the 2008 Presidential race. For most of the Democratic Party’s primaries, Clinton was the clear favourite to win the nomination. But, as history records, she narrowly lost to fellow Senator Barack Obama.

Frustratingly, Blackwell found she was not at the heart of the Clinton versus Obama contest at the crucial stage – for the happiest of reasons. She was pregnant, with her first child, Sienna (now seven).

“We were all keen to see Hillary become President, but none of us ever doubted how wonderful the end result was for America.

“For Democrats, it was an incredibly positive time, especially when President Obama appointed Hillary as his Secretary of State.”

In 2008, her husband’s career took the family to San Francisco (he’s a managing director at Morgan Stanley and they now have a second child – a son, Jake, aged four).

Would Blackwell ever be tempted to work for Clinton again if the politician decides to compete the 2016 Presidential election?

“I see Hillary perhaps every three or four months. But my life is in California now. I’d help her in any way I could, but I couldn’t go back on the road. I have two small children and a job I love.”

During the three years she worked for Yahoo! Inc, Blackwell was responsible for the website’s

Images: Supplied





Image credit: Thinkstock

Blackwell was able to grow closer to former First Lady, Senator Hillary Clinton, than any other Australian.

global public affairs and then for communications strategies across all the company’s business units in the US, Canada and Latin America. Blackwell worked on issues such as human rights, privacy, freedom of expression, the protection of children online, law enforcement and corporate social responsibility. “It was an extraordinary time, in the middle of historic movements like the Iranian Green Revolution and the Arab Spring. We really saw how the internet and social media could be an incredible tool for global social change and how it could be used as much by the forces of evil as well as the forces of good.”

However at the beginning of 2013, Blackwell became head of external affairs for Humanity United, founded by Pam and Pierre Omidyar. Pierre is best known as one of the two founders of eBay.

It is, she says, the position she dreamed of as a young girl, and the one which makes most use of her studies at UTS. As a private, grant making foundation Humanity United tackles some enormous global challenges including genocide, atrocity and conflict prevention, and the fight against modern-day slavery.

Blackwell describes it as an “organisation is about improving people’s lives beyond borders and helping those who have been deprived of their fundamental human rights.” ■

On 9/11

On 11 September 2001, Blackwell and her husband, investment banker Mark Solomons, were living in Manhattan with a view of the Twin Towers.

Blackwell was working for the Democrats in the battle to succeed Rudolph Giuliani as Mayor of New York. It was primary day.

“I was on the subway when the first plane hit,” Blackwell recalls. “I thought that my colleagues were joking when I got in to the office and they told me that a plane had ploughed into the World Trade Center. But I was in the office, watching what was happening on multiple TV screens when the second plane went in and the towers collapsed.”

The primary was immediately postponed. “My husband and I walked back to our apartment on 12th Street which was within the cordoned area around Ground Zero and the real extent of the devastation became very clear. We had gone to donate blood and to volunteer at the local hospital but we weren’t needed because no patients came – there was no one left.”

“We then returned to work – just a couple of blocks from Ground Zero – only days later. It was eerie and deeply moving to sit at desks which were covered in a film of dust and where the newspapers reflected what had happened on September 11.”

Shifting roles

Jenni Hopkins shares her story of how UTS helped her turn a critical corner during a difficult career change

STORY BY KEVIN CHEUNG

It is often said that the average person will go through several career changes in their lifetime. For Jenni Hopkins, a plan to transition into the world of midwifery and to help pregnant women was thrown into disarray when her husband unexpectedly passed away in 2003.

“I was a sole parent,” recalls Hopkins. “At that stage, my son was seven years old and my daughter was four. It was virtually just me as the sole income earner and it was tough.”

Prior to that, the former marketing executive had started her own business specialising in remedial massage. Over time she came to work with many pregnant women, which blossomed into a passion for midwifery – something she chose to pursue when she discovered UTS offers direct entry to its Bachelor of Midwifery course.

“I didn’t want to do nursing...I just wanted to work with pregnant women,” Hopkins explains. “When I saw that UTS was offering direct entry, I just jumped at the opportunity.”

As a single parent, however, the practicalities of university life put her young family under considerable hardship.

“It’s not just the days you have to spend on campus at university: there’s also the work you have to do outside. The clinical element means hospital work, which is a challenge because hospital shifts are unfortunately not very family-friendly.

“The time I had left to earn an income was greatly reduced and I ended up accumulating a lot of debt.” says Hopkins. “In the end, I realised I needed to study part-time, but part-time study wasn’t available back then.”



Image credit: Thinkstock



“To be honest, I wasn’t even aware that all this help was available.”

Hopkins was able to make things work by talking with the faculty staff, who were happy to help create a more flexible study pathway for her. Friends and family helped out with care of the kids. She also drew on her superannuation, citing financial hardship – but she knew this was unsustainable.

“In the end it was all overwhelming. I needed to get some money behind me, and I needed to pay off my debt. That’s why I deferred for twelve months,” says Hopkins. “But at the end of that 12 months, I’d only just gotten ahead of my personal issues, so I ended up taking a second year off, which is the limit.”

The second year of deferral confirmed for Hopkins that she wanted more than ever to complete the midwifery degree. She also discovered that she could receive financial assistance from UTS to help with her living and study expenses.

“To be honest, I wasn’t even aware that all this help was available,” she admits. “Since coming back last year, I’ve had to step up the pace of my studies, but I’ve been made aware of all these opportunities for extra help through scholarships, which have been an amazing help.”

With just 18 months left to go, Hopkins is on the cusp of finally realising her goal of working with pregnant women. She is completing her training at the Royal Hospital for Women in Randwick NSW, where she hopes to one day be positioned as a registered midwife.

To help more students like Jenni, visit www.giving.uts.edu.au or call Andrew Graves on 02 9514 2782. ■■

Creature care

The world's zoos are poised to take a leading role in animal conservation, thanks to researchers like Madelon Willemson.

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY
KEVIN CHEUNG



It seems that no matter how much money is spent on animal conservation, Australia's native fauna continues to face dangers that could lead to extinction. Animal conservationist Madelon Willemson had already spent 15 years working in Australian zoos before deciding to take a break from her career – not because the challenges were too great, but because she needed to find another way to approach them.

“I’ve always tried to create the opportunity for visitors to learn about animals, and I’ve been part of breeding and recovery teams for endangered animals. And what I’ve learned is that we’re not very good at it,” says Willemson.

She was also inspired by a quarterly essay titled *After the Future: Australia’s New Extinction Crisis* by environmentalist and 2007 Australian of the Year Tim Flannery.

“What he wrote about are things I’ve experienced in my work,” explains Willemson. “We were working hard at saving species, but the process was continuously undermined by people or a lack of money, or actions not being implemented.

“Then it dawned on me: ‘I have a Masters in Project Management and a Masters of Science in Animal Behaviour and Physiology – why aren’t I working in this area?’”





“I’m trying to create ... a theoretical framework that is going to help managers and policy makers with species recovery in Australia.”

With that, the Dutch native left her post at Zoos Victoria to undertake a PhD in Biodiversity Conservation at UTS.

“This isn’t just going to be a PhD to sit on the shelf,” declares Willemson. “I’m trying to create concepts and theories that are useful for the real world; a theoretical framework that is going to help managers and policy makers with species recovery in Australia.”

Willemson’s passion for animal conservation began when she was a child, attending primary school next to Royal Burgers’ Zoo in her hometown of Arnhem, Netherlands. With countless afternoons spent hanging out at the zoo and observing animal behaviour, it is no surprise that animal welfare is something that comes naturally to her.

“You’ve got the keepers who provide the best care for the animals, then you’ve got the visitors who we can educate about conservation. And you also have to be able to run the zoo as a business, so these elements make it a very interesting place to work.”

But she recognises that attitudes have changed considerably since her childhood years, and continue to change.

“Some people don’t like zoos because they say animals should be in the wild. I would’ve agreed with that 20 years ago – they were really only there for our amusement. When I was 12, I was throwing peanuts at the baboons. That practice was stopped years later because they realised it wasn’t good for the animals.

“Zoos Victoria and Taronga Zoo are very good examples of how zoos are no longer just

for entertainment – we’ve become very clever at educating visitors and calling them to action with community conservation programs. Our keepers and curators have so much expert knowledge. Animal care is now at an incredibly high standard.”

Willemson concedes that not all zoos are performing as well as they could in animal conservation because they’re working towards different goals and priorities. While some zoos focus on preventing the extinction of local animals, others may choose to focus on supporting overseas rehabilitation programs. In each instance, a balance must be struck with the zoo’s business operations.

However, Willemson’s area of research – exploring how project management can be applied to animal conservation – speaks to a much broader vision.

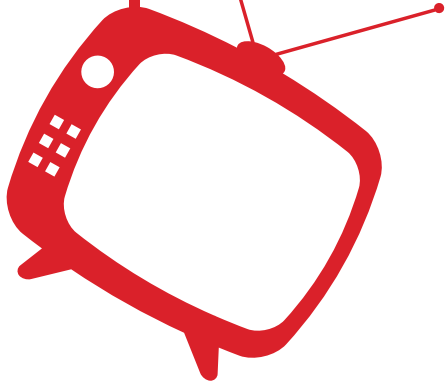
“Zoos are fast becoming conservation organisations,” she observes. “Globally, zoos have more than 700 million visitors per year. That’s 10 per cent of the world’s population. Together, we could become a powerhouse when it comes to reaching people with the issues of our natural world.”

Later this year, Willemson will be attending the 69th annual conference of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums in New Delhi to present a climate change communications package that she is developing for zoo visitors. As part of an organisation that provides leadership to the world’s zoos in animal care, conservation of biodiversity, and global sustainability, she is well placed to turn that vision into a reality. ■■



Willemson was inspired by an essay by Tim Flannery to take greater steps in her field towards animal conservation.

“On the wall next to her is a vast stained whiteboard, with the names of the powerful, the clever, the famous and the funny all scheduled for weeks into the future.”



**SEE THE VIDEO
ON THE TOWER
MAGAZINE APP**

Striking a nerve

Behind the scenes of Q&A with series producer and UTS alumna, Amanda Collinge

STORY BY JENNA PRICE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN CHEUNG

It's a live-to-air show that encourages people to debate politics and society, and the person who brings you this debate is Amanda Collinge. Collinge, 54, is the series producer for *Q&A*, the ABC's answer to Britain's *Question Time*. She's the one that wrangles all those people, all their minds, to negotiate the show, which host Tony Jones likes to describe as democracy in action.

She makes those phone calls from an office which looks neat as a pin from the visitor's side of the desk. Beneath her feet is a cascade of manilla folders. On the wall next to her is a vast stained whiteboard, with the names of the powerful, the clever, the famous and the funny, all scheduled for weeks into the future. For the past five years, she's helped shape one of the surprise hits on ABC's schedule. But at the beginning of this year, it began to be clear after the change of government in September 2013 senior ministers no longer felt compelled to be part of the program.

"The previous Labor government for all its faults were willing to be part of the discussion." But it's been impossible to get the Prime Minister to appear – only Joe Hockey has been prepared to have a go.

So Collinge and the team decided to beat the traditional political system – and to focus on themes which would also bring in other viewers. And that change in direction then produced what she says is her favourite *Q&A* program ever, the broadcast from the Garma Festival in Arnhem Land.

Unforgettable. It was an outside broadcast, it opened with yidaki players, led by Djalu Gurruwiwi, representing the four directions of this land and, as a first in prime time, an acknowledgement of country. For Collinge, who is trying to make the panels on *Q&A* more diverse, the sight of an all-indigenous panel was one achievement on the way to a broader goal.

That commitment to diversity was borne out of her time at the NSW Institute of Technology, a forerunner to UTS. She studied at PLC in Pymble but was already planning her future and, unusually for the time, she planned a gap year before she began her university studies. Two weeks after the HSC, she found herself hitchhiking around Africa.

On her return, she found herself studying Communication with students from a range of backgrounds. Collinge says a key to her world view was the opportunity to work with students of all ages and stages, from all over the world.

"I was looking for less order and [communication] was a continuation of the adventure the gap year had been," says Collinge.

And even in first year, she started to contribute to the university, first as a writer for the student newspaper *NEWSWIT* and then as a radio producer and announcer at UTS radio station 2SER, interviewing everyone from student politicians to Zimbabwean mercenaries.

Those are skills which stay with her today and which she took to her first paid job in journalism at Brisbane's 4ZZZ.FM.

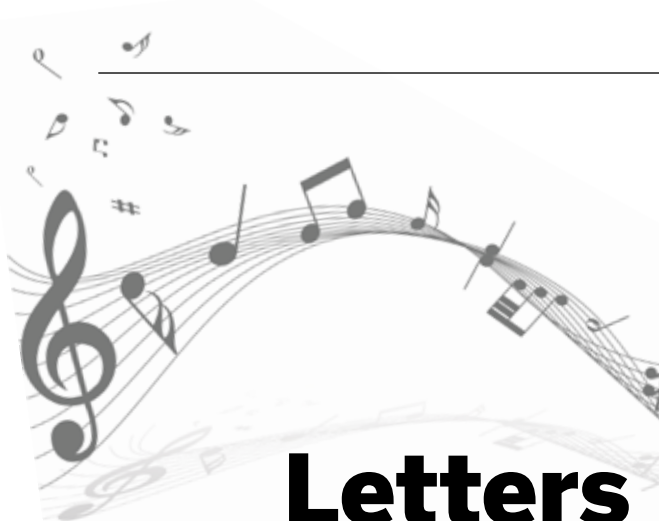
She moved to Triple J radio in Sydney before moving overseas where she built her own media company, selling documentaries to the BBC, Deutsche Welle and SBS Australia. On her return to Australia, Collinge worked as a television reporter for the ABC and SBS on *Lateline*, *Dateline* and *Insight*.

Collinge is often trying to explain that the *Q&A* audience reflects the Australian electorate on the day of broadcast – and that can surprise panellists.

But her job is to surprise the audience both in the studio and at home – and judging by those scrawls on that stained noticeboard, she will be surprising us for years to come. ■■



ABOVE: Amanda Collinge works behind the scenes to assemble panelists to appear on *Q&A*.



Letters of note

At 31, Gabriel van Aalst is now the chief executive of one of the world's most successful chamber orchestras – and it's all thanks to his audacious letter-writing skills.

STORY BY LORENZA BACINO



It's been quite a year for Gabriel van Aalst, the newly-appointed chief executive of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, London. He's just had lunch with the Orchestra's founder and life president, the 90-year-old and ever active, Sir Neville Marriner, to discuss next season's concerts.

And he's been involved in a whirlwind of international celebrations in honour of Sir Neville's 90th birthday – all spearheaded by the man himself. Fortunately van Aalst is a happy traveller, given that he spends approximately three months a year on the road, overseeing a hundred concerts.

"I'm this 31-year-old from Australia, who has somehow been entrusted to celebrate this man. When I was a kid, Neville and the Academy constituted this conglomerate of quality. I never dreamed in a million years I'd ever be involved with them," he reflects.

Van Aalst, a UTS graduate, has had the privilege of working closely with Sir Neville since 2012. He has also been working with guest conductor, American pianist Murray Perahia, as well as the orchestra's

music director, Joshua Bell, one of the world's finest virtuoso violinists.

"The most amazing experience is to sit down with these three luminaries and discuss what we're going to play, when and where," says van Aalst.

The Academy of St Martin in the Fields began with a small group of friends in 1958 in Sir Neville's front room. It's since become one of the most recorded orchestras in the world.

"Everyone talks about the Academy sound. It's this beautiful rich lyrical string sound – that's what it's famous for," explains van Aalst. "Sir Neville was a string player and it's always been built of the finest instrumentalists in London. Chances are, if you have a classic collection, we'll be on it."

Van Aalst has English-Irish roots, and a legal and theatre family background. It's no surprise, then that he graduated from a double-degree in Media Arts and Production and Law at UTS in 2006. He fondly remembers making dozens of experimental films.

"UTS provided an amazing environment with fantastic on-site facilities", he recalls. "There was the

"The most amazing experience is to sit down with these three luminaries and discuss what we're going to play, when and where."



Images: Supplied

right balance between theory and hands-on access to equipment, we could go out and just do everything. That was really exciting.”

He wrote the first of a number of letters in response to an ad on the university notice board, which resulted in a stint on Jim Henson’s sci-fi TV series, *Farscape*.

“As a 21-year-old, working on this huge international film project was just the best.”

Van Aalst went on to work at SNTV Nickelodeon cartoon channel, all the while playing piano and violin for the Sydney Youth Orchestra, which he’d been involved with since the age of 19.

Upon graduating from UTS, he wrote another letter to the producers of *The Producers*, the Mel Brooks musical in Melbourne. He informed them, cheekily, that they should hire him because he wanted to be a producer too. To his surprise, his unorthodox approach worked and he was invited to join the production.

However, it was a chance meeting (and a few more unorthodox letters) with John Bell of the Bell Shakespeare Company and producer Andrew

McKinnon at a Sydney Youth Orchestra party that landed him the role of associate producer and company manager on *One Man*, where he worked with renowned actor and theatre director Steven Berkoff. At that stage, he was 24 and still hadn’t completed his law degree at UTS.

He toured Australia for three years with, among other shows, *Porgy and Bess*. This, plus working with Miriam Margolyes (pictured, top right), whom he describes as “hysterical”, marked a turning point in his career.

“If Andrew McKinnon hadn’t taken that risk, I would not be where I am today,” he says. “That job allowed me to develop my skills, finish my law degree and made me realise I wanted to work in the arts.”

A new opportunity came in the form of a job as orchestra manager for the Australian Chamber Orchestra. Living on the road, doing 150 concerts a year gave him the confidence to move to London.

His biggest challenge now is to expand The Academy’s presence in the UK, and to make it as viable and successful at home as it is abroad. ■■

The Academy of St Martin in the Fields first performed in 1959 and has recorded more than 500 sessions since.



“Glenn’s passion, commitment to innovation, research excellence and reputation as a leading technologist set him apart from the other candidates.”

Photo by Jesse Taylor Photography

Professor Glenn Wightwick is the new Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research, at UTS.

GLENN WIGHTWICK TAKES THE REINS OF RESEARCH

Former IBM Australia chief technologist and director of research and development, Glenn Wightwick, has been appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, at UTS. This follows an extensive search to fill the role previously held by Professor Attila Brungs, who is now Vice-Chancellor.

A member of the Vice-Chancellor’s Industry Advisory Board since 2011, Wightwick is also a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering and has been on the Australian Research Council (ARC) College of Experts.

He is a distinguished individual in his

field, with numerous publications and patents to his name. He is also a leader in commercialisation and innovation, having worked on IBM’s global technical strategy and being appointed to federal and state government bodies, including the Information Technology Industry Innovation Council and the NSW Digital Economy Industry Taskforce.

“UTS can be proud of how quickly we have established a global reputation for quality, as a result of our sustained efforts and focus on excellence in teaching and research over recent years,” says UTS Chancellor Professor Vicki Sara. “Glenn’s passion, commitment to

innovation, research excellence and reputation as a leading technologist set him apart from the other candidates.”

Already a valued collaborator with UTS’s Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology, Wightwick will be implementing the current research strategy and spearheading the university’s future research plans.

“I am absolutely delighted and excited to be joining UTS,” Professor Wightwick says. “I have had a strong relationship with UTS over the last eight years and have been impressed by UTS’s vision, culture and commitment to research and innovation.”

UTS ALUMNUS APPOINTED RMIT VICE-CHANCELLOR

UTS alumnus Martin Bean is going back to his Melbourne roots after being appointed Vice-Chancellor at RMIT University. Born and raised in Melbourne, he has come full circle, with a few stops along the way.

Since 2009, Bean has been Vice-Chancellor of The Open University – Britain’s biggest academic institution that offers flexible, part-time study. “I am proud that The Open University enables students from all walks of life to realise their potential,” said Bean, during his tenure. The university recently offered its courses via smartphone and tablet to its 200,000-plus students.

“Technology is not a threat to traditional education, it’s a tool that can be used to improve it,” says Bean.

RMIT’s Chancellor Dr Ziggy Switkowski AO said he doubted RMIT could have found anybody “more capable and more experienced” than Bean to take the lead at a time of dramatic change in higher education.

Dr Switkowski believes having an understanding of “the student experience” was another reason for choosing Bean to succeed Professor Margaret Gardner AO, who is moving on to become Vice-Chancellor at Monash University.

Bean attended UTS as a mature age student, studying for a degree in adult education in the little spare time he could find after work. “And even now, a quarter of a century later, I can still vividly recall walking down to the campus in the evening.

“I’d go through Chinatown, where the air was thick with so many tempting smells from so many tempting restaurants, then arrive at Broadway, to be greeted by the equally distinct, but somewhat less tempting aroma of what

may very well be the worst coffee ever to grace the southern hemisphere.

“And there I’d work with fellow adult learners, comparing notes and ideas

“Technology is not a threat to traditional education, it’s a tool that can be used to improve it.”

over that awful, awful coffee, as we sat in the ‘unique’ surroundings of the UTS Tower,” recalls Bean with a wry smile.

“The infrastructure revolution brought about by the City Campus Masterplan means the Broadway Campus is pretty much unrecognisable from when I was studying,” he adds.

Bean previously served as Microsoft’s worldwide manager for education products group. He had also worked with Sylvan Learning, Thomson Learning, software giant Novell and other IT companies on projects bringing together technology and education.



Martin Bean

Photo supplied



Sign up for an alumni tour of LRS.

Photo by Ben Casimir

UTS LIBRARY’S ROBOTS ARE OPEN FOR BUSINESS

The UTS Library Retrieval System (LRS) is up and robotically running. New and frequently used books will remain on the shelves – around 245,000 printed items – only low-use collection items will be housed in the LRS, with the capacity to store one million items. At the current acquisition rate, full capacity won’t be reached until 2040.

The storage facility has six aisles, with each aisle serviced by a robotic crane on rails. Items are stored by size in approximately 12,000 galvanised steel bins of four different heights.

Requesting items is simple. Just search for a book using the library catalogue and select the item you want. If that item is held in the LRS, you will see “Library Retrieval System” under location. All you have to do then is select the “Request from LRS” button and fill in your details.

One of the six cranes will then retrieve the bin that contains the book you’ve requested and deliver it to library staff. The book will then be retrieved, placed on a trolley and walked down to the library at selected times during the day. Located on the western Jones Street end of the Alumni Green, your book will be held there for you to retrieve for up to seven days.

UTS Library is conducting tours of LRS for alumni in November. Don’t miss this opportunity to see LRS in action – www.lib.uts.edu.au/news/171512/lrs-tours-alumni



Karl Vaupel and a model of the StackLift

3P BUSINESS INNOVATION

TACKLES BACK-BREAKING WORK

A piece of equipment that will bridge the gap between forklifts and conveyor belts – keeping workers safe and costs down – has won this year’s UTS 3P Business Plan competition.

Industrial design student Karl Vaupel designed an innovative variation on the traditional dolly, a mobile platform used for moving heavy loads. Vaupel was inspired during a visit to a timber mill in China, where he observed how five people, plus the occasional forklift, were needed to move heavy loads of timber between the milling machinery used in wood processing.

His response is the StackLift, a lightweight, aluminium dolly that can be rolled between the various stations in a mill. Springs that adjust according to the weight of the timber loaded on the dolly automatically bring the timber to the right height for the operator.

Vaupel believes the dolly could sell to timber mills in Australia and abroad, as well as warehouses and manufacturers.

The final-year industrial design student from the Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building (DAB) at UTS has won \$10,000 in prize money for his innovative design.

Story and photo by Lesley Parker.

UTS TO SPEARHEAD AUSTRALIA’S DIGITAL PRECINCT

UTS will be at the heart of a new creative initiative to put NSW and Australia on the map as a globally recognised innovation leader. The initiative will see the creation of Sydney’s own digital precinct – rivalling London’s TechCity and NYC Silicon Alley. It will be one of five Knowledge Hubs that the NSW Government is creating.

Working closely with the NSW Government and industry bodies, UTS will be co-ordinating resources and partnerships between Australia’s thriving ecosystem of creative and digital start-ups and its major cultural, media, commercial and educational organisations.

By opening these lines of communication, the digital precinct will go a long way towards addressing the low success rate of Australian technology start-ups, which has been attributed to an unstructured venture capital investment environment.

The digital precinct is expected to initially be headquartered at 622 Harris Street, next to the new Frank Gehry-designed Dr Chau Chak Wing Building from 2015, with additional accelerator and start-up sites to open at Darling Harbour Live, the Powerhouse Museum and a new upcoming on-campus entrepreneur programme for students.



CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF WRITING



Nigel Bartlett speaks at the UTS Alumni Writers Network reunion

The UTS Alumni Writers Network celebrated its 10th anniversary with a reunion in September at the Aerial Function Centre. Reunions such as this are a wonderful opportunity for UTS alumni to share ideas, network and stay in touch with like-minded professional writers.

This year's special guests and panellists were novelists Dr Delia Falconer and Bem Le Hunte, publisher Bronwyn Mehan and journalist Nigel Bartlett, who shared their

experiences and insights into the modern world of professional writing. Discussion included Bartlett's move from the monthly grind of magazine publishing into creative storytelling; while Mehan considered the growing choices in publishing platforms and the options between them.

For more information about the UTS Alumni Writers' Network, register at www.alumni.uts.edu.au/page.aspx?pid=450 or visit www.facebook.com/UTSWritersAlumni.

SCHOOL OF HEALTH ADDS ORTHOPTICS

The UTS Graduate School of Health is offering a new orthoptics program in 2015. Although most Australians are unfamiliar with orthoptics as a profession, practitioners are a vital force for zeroing in on eye conditions sometimes missed in the very young.

"There is a great opportunity for young people aspiring to a career in an allied health field to get a great education and great jobs," says Associate Professor Kathryn Rose.

The new UTS graduate entry program does not require a health or science education background.



Students from the Balmain Teachers' College at their 55th reunion

TEACHERS AND FRIENDS FOR LIFE

Since graduating in 1958, the students from the Orange Grove Annex of the Balmain Teachers' College have gathered once a year to celebrate the time they spent together. 2014, marks the 55th reunion.

"Everyone who can physically be here is here," beams Julie Dartnell-Harbin.

The impressive turnout is a testament to the dedication and strength of the college, one of UTS's founding institutions.

While 55 years is a long time, it's clear there is plenty of news to catch up on since last year. "It's like a lifetime of memory of something we did that was useful," says Virginia Watson. "We didn't just stay home and cook dinner once we left school, so it's been very satisfying that way."



From left: Private Miller Mack from South Australia; Australian soldiers at a training camp in England, c 1916; Leslie John Locke

Photos courtesy of Australian War Memorial, State Library of NSW

THE FORGOTTEN ANZACS: BLACK DIGGERS IN WWI

As a young woman growing up in north-western NSW in the 1930s, Isabel Flick couldn't understand why her father had stopped attending the local Anzac Day parades.

Single and only 23 years of age when he enlisted, Michael Flick didn't return to the family's home town of Collarenebri, NSW until 1919. The family was proud of his service in the First World War and Isabel used to chide her father about his reluctance to take part in the one day in the year when the courage and sacrifice of returned soldiers was recognised.

As historian Professor Heather Goodall tells the story on Anzac Day, Michael did don his uniform and medals and head into town. But instead of joining the other veterans, he walked straight through the parade down to the river to fish with his mates.

Like many other Indigenous Australians who served in the war, Flick returned to discover that he was not only refused a Soldier Settlement block and membership

of the local RSL club, but his children had been denied enrolment at the public school and were at risk of being taken away by the authorities.

Black Diggers had expected things to change for them and their families once they returned home, says Professor Goodall, an academic at UTS and a core member of the university's Cosmopolitan Civil Societies Research Centre. "But when they came back from the war they were excluded from the things offered to white veterans ... Mick had expected his sacrifice to be recognised. It wasn't."

The More than Service seminar held at the State Library of NSW heard also from Professors Mick Dodson and John Maynard. They head up a new project, *Serving our Country*, that aims to compile a history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have served in Australia's armed forces.

"The review revealed that the story of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in conflicts that Australia

was involved in was relatively untold and some would argue, ignored," says Professor Dodson, the Director of the National Centre for Indigenous Studies.

Once enlisted, Indigenous soldiers could be found breaking in horses for the Australian Light Horse, fighting in the trenches in France or risking capture in Palestine. Some were wounded; some died in action and were buried in mass graves. Others made it home.

Professor Goodall says many Indigenous civilians were proud of their men for serving in the war – but "then they became aware of their betrayal [by the government]".

Michael Flick survived the war to raise a family, but his experience after the war changed his attitude towards the military, she says. When his sons were thinking of enlisting to serve in the Second World War he told them: "This is not your war. It is their war."

Story by Wendy Frew

 UTS SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Creating a brighter future

- ◉ Fled **war-torn** Iraq at age 12
- ◉ **Lived in hiding** for 5 years before settling in Australia
- ◉ Currently **studying** at UTS

His name is Ameel, and he is now living out his dream, thanks to the generosity of the UTS community.

We can help more students like Ameel reach their full potential by donating today at giving.uts.edu.au/annual-appeal

“To be honest, I wasn’t even aware that help was available.”