Since our last Engagement Newsletter, a number of new projects have begun and well-established programs are growing and thriving. The activities you’ll read about are examples of how engagement connects our intellectual strengths to our communities in diverse ways that demonstrate mutual benefit.

The Energy Lecture Series, hosted by the Whitlam Institute is now underway! Check out the Calendar to see future events in the series. Formal launch events were held recently for the partnership between UWS and Fairfield Library involving the “yourtutor” service being provided by Tutoring Australasia; and for the official release of the UWS “Building Better Relationships with Schools 2008–10” program. Each event attracted a wide array of school, community, and political leadership and gained good media attention.

The Sudanese Youth in Transition DVD will continue to support this valuable partnership between UWS and Fairfield Library for wider distribution. You will also read about a partnership project involving immigrant youth designing a DVD about their experiences in Sydney.

Since our last Engagement Newsletter, a number of new possible partnership activities. The Third UWS Acquisitive Sculpture Award Formal launch events were held recently for the University of Western Sydney Nanotechnology Network that resulted in highly successful meeting of the UWS leaders gathered in late April for a wide array of school, community, and political leadership and gained good media attention.

UWS researchers, students and business leaders gathered in late April for a highly successful meeting of the UWS Nanotechnology Network that resulted in several new possible partnership activities.

The Third UWS Acquisitive Sculpture Award and Exhibition drew many public visitors and school students to the Campbelltown campus to see the exciting works installed around the lakes and lawns.

The Sudanese Youth in Transition DVD project involving immigrant youth designing information resources for their peers is ready for wider distribution. You will also read about future activities coming up later this year.

Each of these partnership projects is a carefully crafted program component that advances the University’s engagement agenda while responding to community ideas and needs. The activities provide rich opportunities for students and staff to learn and conduct research in collaboration with partners in ways that advance both theory and practice.

The Sudanese Youth in Transition DVD
- Sudanese Youth in Transition DVD
- Careers expos link students and employers
- UWS sculpture prize winners
- UWS, MACROC and MCSL
- Schools action plan 2008

Our mission in the Office of University Engagement is to act as facilitators – the people who make the connections, encourage creative thinking, and strive to remove barriers and create possibilities for university-community collaboration.

In this newsletter issue I particularly want to acknowledge that one of our Community Engagement Facilitators, Lynne Fairey, left us mid-May when her secondment to OUE concluded. We thank her for her many contributions to the team effort and we wish her well.

In sum, through this newsletter we hope to share with you the excitement of “the big picture” of engagement across the University and our many communities. We hope you find the stories as inspiring as we do, and that they give you some new ideas about community partnership possibilities.

Professor Barbara Holland
Pro-Vice Chancellor Engagement

The featured partner is the University of Western Sydney and the Australian Museum formed a partnership in early 2007 to collaboratively facilitate Science in the Suburbs (SIS) Hawkesbury for Primary and High School students across Greater Western Sydney.

This Dynamic, two day event was designed as a capacity building process for science communication in suburban and rural communities with a primary objective to “turn kids onto Science”. The SIS Hawkesbury event was supported by the Australian Government through the Science Connections Programme administered by the Department of Education, Science and Training.

“The event created an opportunity for students and staff to participate in community-based learning through inviting local schools to the campus to attend workshops, shows, tours and the Science in the Suburbs Expo. Twenty seven Primary Schools and 17 High Schools registered their interest with 1128 students attending from across Greater Western Sydney” said Sue Thomas (Community Engagement Facilitator for the College of Health Science)

The Science in the Suburbs program, which includes the UWS SIS Hawkesbury event, is recognised as one of the highest quality science education programs in NSW. The University of Western Sydney will continue to support this valuable contribution through ongoing partnership with the Australian Museum in 2008.

Welcome to the E-Newsletter from the Office of University Engagement. Since our last issue, a number of new projects have begun and well-established programs are growing and thriving. The activities you’ll read about are examples of how engagement connects our intellectual strengths to our communities in diverse ways that demonstrate mutual benefit.

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CAREERS EXPOS
LINK STUDENTS AND EMPLOYERS

Students and employers had the chance to connect at recent careers expos hosted by UWS Careers & Cooperative Education.

EdFest

EdFest, the Education Careers Expo, was held on 14 March 2008 in the Sir Ian Turbott Auditorium at the Parramatta campus. A total of 32 exhibitors attended the event including the NSW Department of Education & Training (DET), Catholic Education Office Sydney and ACT DET.

Business Careers Expo

The Business Careers Expo – held on 15 April at the Parramatta campus – attracted more than 750 students visiting 40 exhibitors. The expo provided UWS Business and Law students with the opportunity to speak with representatives from Australia’s largest corporations about their selection criteria and graduate recruitment practices.

The Business Expo also went beyond facilitating employer and student contact by including a luncheon opportunity for academic staff and employer representatives to network.

Engineering Expo

The Engineering Careers Expo on 1 May at the Penrith (Kingswood) campus featured a range of exhibitors including John Holland, Boral, Energy Australia and BHP Billiton.

Eager Engineering students peppered exhibitors with questions in an effort to find out which organisations presented the best opportunities for them.

One exhibitor commented that the students had “Good questions, strong interest and specific focus! Not here just for the freebies.”

For further information about UWS’ Careers Expos or any of the other services provided by Careers & Cooperative Education, please see www.uws.edu.au/careers or contact us on 1800 897 297 or at careers@uws.edu.au
SUDANESE YOUTH IN TRANSITION DVD

The UWS subject known as Learning through Community Service (LCS) provides a variety of exciting opportunities for students across the College of Arts to carry out community engaged projects. One of these projects involves a group of students from the School of Communication Arts and the School of Education in the production of a DVD focusing on the issues Sudanese youth face as they seek to make effective transitions from school to work or further study.

The Sudanese Youth in Transition DVD features the unique talents of four Sudanese youths (“the stars”) who conduct all interviews and are seen in a variety of day-to-day activities.

During the making of the documentary, the lives of the Sudanese youths involved were transformed as they became more confident, developed amazing initiative and really took control of the documentary process. The film-making experience significantly contributed to the development of these youths’ identity and sense of belonging as Sudanese Australians – as having a legitimate place and voice within the community.

The DVD itself is only in its draft stage, however, plans are underway to facilitate the production a fully-featured DVD and resource kit, subtitled in Dinka, that can be widely distributed and screened in schools, migrant support centres and homes to initiate discussion and inspire action.

An edited 40 minute video was compiled and presented at the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) conference in Dec 2007 and was extremely well received.

A short trailer of the documentary was posted on YouTube and can be viewed at: http://youtube.com/watch?v=05k8Dv15P4

For further information please contact Iqbal Barkat at i.barkat@uws.edu.au or Rob McDonald at robert.mcdonald@uws.edu.au

LILY POND NEWS

Croak! Hi I’m the Red Eyed Tree Frog (litoria chloris) from Port Douglas! After an interesting and informative tour of the Mossman Gorge in the Daintree National Park by the representatives of the traditional owners, the Kuku Yalanji, Professor Barbara Holland, PVC Engagement purchased me as a memento of the visit and gift to the OUE Frog Collection.

Unfortunately up to half of the Earth’s approximately 6,000 known amphibian species could go extinct in our lifetime. The main causes are habitat loss, climate change, pollution and pesticides, introduced species, over-collection for food and pets and the most immediate cause…a parasitic fungus called amphibian chytrid which invades the outer layers of their skin.

2008 is the Year of the Frog. We can help the frogs by frog-scaping our gardens. Hop to it! For more information see www.amphibianark.org and www.frog.org.au
UWS SCULPTURE PRIZE: THE WINNERS ARE ANNOUNCED!

Two monumental artworks, inspired by a fairground carousel and the nature of modern digital technologies, have taken out the University of Western Sydney’s Acquisitive Sculpture Award for 2008.

Sculptors Michael Sibel and Marcus Tatton have been selected from 24 finalists as the winners of the UWS acquisitive prize and the Landcom acquisitive prize – each to the value of $20,000.

The winner of the UWS award, Michael Sibel’s “Carousel,” is a simplistic depiction of a fairground carousel created with 250kg of bronze, timber, stainless and mild steel. Although the artwork evokes images of fairground fun and frivolity, Mr Sibel says the carousel is also a reflection on life as an ever-changing journey.

The winner of the 2008 Landcom acquisitive prize, Marcus Tatton’s “Digital Litter” is an imagining of the final resting place of the thousands of encoded emails and text messages that never reach their final destinations. The result is an archaic ruin of weathered zeros and ones, scattered across the landscape.

As the winner of the UWS award, Michael Sibel’s “Carousel” will now permanently adorn the grounds of the UWS Campbelltown Campus, while Marcus Tatton’s “Digital Litter” is destined to reside at the site of a Landcom housing development.

The UWS Acquisitive Sculpture Exhibition featuring these works as well as the 22 other finalists, 2004 winner ‘Inara’ by Michael Le Grand and 2006 winner “Solar Chronograph II” by Grant Calvin will be on display until 1st June 2008.

For further information please contact Monica McMahon at monica.mcmahon@uws.edu.au

Left to right: Mick Owens (Landcom), Marcus Tatton (Artist), John Phillips (Chancellor, UWS), Janice Reid (Vice- Chancellor, UWS) and Michael Sibel (Artist) at the Awards.
UWS, MACROC AND MCSL

On 20th February Professor Barbara Holland, (PVC Engagement) took part in a signing ceremony with Councillor Rob Elliot, President of MACROC (Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils) and Dell Cotter, Chairperson, Macarthur Centre for Sustainable Living (MCSL) at a function in Paul Wakeling’s Showroom. The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the three organisations demonstrates their willingness to work together collaboratively in partnership for the development of the Macarthur Centre for Excellence in Sustainability.

The Symmetry Sustainable Business Project, an Ausindustry funded program, is an example of this collaboration. The Symmetry Project aims to build capabilities of small business owners and managers, employing less than twenty workers, improve their environmental practices especially in regards to water usage and energy efficiency.

Businesses participating in this program would hopefully not only strengthen their bottom line, but also reduce the carbon footprint of their operations.

UWS academics Robyn Bushell and Bruce Simmons have developed the toolkit to assist the businesses, Macarthur Business Enterprise Centre (MBEC), through the Symmetry Mentor Bill Parker, will provide the mentoring service and MCSL will perform audits. MACROC will project manage, market and manage accreditation.

If you wish to find out more about the Symmetry Project please contact Bill Parker on 02 4648 0836 or email bill@macarthurbec.com.au

SCHOOLS ACTION PLAN 2008

The first annual Action Plan to support implementation of Building Better Relationships with Schools 2008-10 has been developed. It contains a wide range of new and existing initiatives; just some of these are:

- the introduction of Schools Pages on the UWS website (http://www.uws.edu.au/community/in_the_community/for_schools);
- the Lachlan Macquarie College partnership with the NSW Department of Education and Training which will provide enriching programs to improve identified teaching and learning outcomes in maths and science;
- extension of the Fast Forward program which encourages year 10 students at risk of dropping out to engage with education and stay on at school;
- an Indigenous school student outreach program including mentoring for Indigenous school students;
- development of strategies for running or helping with gifted and talented programs;
- a scheme to extend the number of UWS students involved in mentoring or other community service activities with school students or schools;
- UWS Day at Campbelltown and Penrith campuses (last year a total of 2600 year 11 students participated in on-campus workshops and lectures, with all students given access to the UWS e-learning site till the end of year 12);
- joint UWS/school sector research funding submissions and better dissemination of the results of school-related research;
- subject-specific workshops and seminars for school teachers; and
- development of online access to educational resources for schools, including work with the Department of Education and Training’s Centre for Learning Innovation.

For further information please contact Anne McLean on 0420 946 183 or a.mclean@uws.edu.au
On Friday 23rd May, Mr James Coleborne (School Education Director, Fairfield, south Western Sydney Region) launched the Campus Art Project for the inaugural exhibition of artworks by students from Chester Hill North Public School.

The Campus Art Project enables students from local primary and secondary schools to showcase their artwork in exhibitions at the Margot Hardy Gallery, based on Bankstown Campus, which has recently been refurbished by Capital Works and Facilities.

The project is designed to encourage school students to prepare their own art exhibition, and offers student’s opportunities of learning that are different from their regular classes.

UWS has developed an exhibition resource kit to assist schools in producing a professional exhibition and this exhibition is an example of how this kit being put to use.

This event has been generously supported by SIFF students, the University Art Collection, Bankstown Provost, Professor Wayne McKenna and the Bankstown Campus Life Committee.

Schools wishing to participate in the project should contact Monica McMahon, UWS Art Curator at monica.mcmahon@uws.edu.au

VENUE
The Margot Hardy Gallery, Foyer of Building 23 University of Western Sydney (Bankstown Campus)

EXHIBITION CONTINUES
24th May – 1st August 2008

Opening hours:
Monday – Friday
9.00am – 5.00pm

NEW STAFF MEMBER JOINS OUE TEAM!

Anne McLean is Manager of the Schools Project which aims to develop a university-wide strategy and action plan to build better, and mutually beneficial, relationships with the high schools and primary schools in Greater Western Sydney.

From 2002 to 2007 Anne was Executive Officer to the Vice-Chancellor of UWS, supporting her in her leadership and management of the University and providing advice and assistance to internal and external stakeholders on her behalf.

Before that Anne was a freelance writer and editor, and spent 14 years in the Australian Public Service in a variety of managerial, policy development, project management, industry liaison and information services roles. From 1998 to 2001 she led a team that provided policy advice and secretariat support to the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission (NOHSC), its Executive and Audit Committees and its senior management group, as well as coordinating organisational compliance and reporting on a range of legislative and governance-related matters.

Anne has helped to develop national strategies, standards and best practice approaches for the prevention of occupational fatalities, injuries and diseases in Australia. In 1999 she was awarded a NOHSC Australia Day medal for her commitment to the Commission’s work and contribution to its understanding of the role of standards in occupational health and safety.

She has a BA (Hons) from the University of Sydney with majors in English Literature and Psychology, and a postgraduate Diploma of Librarianship from the University of NSW.
On the 23rd and 24th September hundreds of local students will be part of one of the biggest science excursions in the state at Science in the Suburbs Hawkesbury.

For two days high school and primary students from across the west will have the chance to see first hand how science works in their everyday lives at the University of Western Sydney’s Hawkesbury campus.

With interactive workshops, shows, tours and talks presented by the University of Western Sydney, the CSIRO, the University of Sydney and the Australian Museum there is something to capture the attention of every student.

“The whole program picks up on the recognition that in Australia we must do more to interest kids in Science” says Executive Dean of the UWS College of Health and Science, Professor Beryl Hesketh.

“We want them to feel the excitement of science and discovery so we can produce our fair share of scientists in the Western Suburbs.”

“The event in 2007 was a great success with over 1200 students attending” says program coordinator, Dr Sophie Lieberman, “We are thrilled that this event is becoming part of the educational calendar in Western Sydney.”

Hosted by the University of Western Sydney, Science in the Suburbs at Hawkesbury is part of the Science in the City Project run by the Australian Museum with Executive Partner the University of Western Sydney.

For more information please contact the Science Communications office at the Australian Museum on 02 9320 6389 or visit http://scienceinthesuburbs.net/hawkesbury/
NANOTECHNOLOGY NETWORK

Over 70 people enjoyed another stimulating evening of nanotechnology, science and industry at the UWS Nanotechnology Network meeting in May. Lu Papi brought the prototype of the Freedom Wheelchair and demonstrated its lightness, ease of operation, flexibility and design attributes. Lu advised that it is anticipated that the Wheelchair will go into production later this year.

Lu Papi demonstrates the Freedom Wheelchair prototype

WHAT’S ON

SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN: “YOURTUTOR” PARTNERSHIP

On 30 May the Minister for Western Sydney, the Hon. Barbara Perry MP, launched a partnership between UWS and Fairfield Library which will double the number of free online tutoring sessions available to Fairfield school students who are members of the library.

The “yourtutor” service, provided by Tutoring Australasia through over 200 libraries across Australia, is in high demand from students after school, with many not able to afford private tutoring and whose parents are not able to help with homework due to working long hours or not speaking English at home. The anonymity of the service makes it easier for students to explain where they are having difficulty.

Tutoring is available for years 4–12 in Mathematics, Science, English, assignment research and study skills. Minister Perry said “The yourtutor partnership empowers students with the confidence to take on the challenges of HSC study and beyond. I applaud UWS and Fairfield City Council for showing such a keen commitment to the education of the youth of the area.”

SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN: E-BUDDIES AT KINGSWOOD HIGH

Twenty UWS staff and students have become online buddies to year 11 Kingswood High School students, as part of the NSW Department of Education and Training’s “e-buddies” program.

E-buddies was run for the first time at Arthur Phillip High School in 2007 with mentors from the business community, and proved successful in engaging students in both the curriculum and career exploration. Penrith City Council staff are also participating as mentors in the Kingswood High program.

The program was launched at a ceremony at the school on 1 May. Each mentor met with his/her student for a get-to-know-you chat, with some parents also involved in the discussion. Mentors will communicate with their students weekly via email for two terms, helping the students to think about future goals and how to achieve them. At the end of the program there will be a debriefing and celebratory get-together for mentors and students.

UWS Postdoctoral Fellow Dr Tim Stait-Gardner presented on NMR Diffusion – A better view of the nanoscale and outlined some of the research being conducted by the UWS Nanoscale Organisation & Dynamics Research Group at Campbelltown Campus.

Mr Mathew Dipnall, Managing Director, Nano Goods & Services, then gave an overview of Nanobits – An Introductory Learning Package for Students, Families and Business. The evening was chaired by Professor John Bartlett, UWS School of Natural Sciences.

Following the presentations there was an opportunity for participants to ask questions and network. This is an example of UWS working with business, industry and governments to bring knowledge to life.