



SEPTEMBER 2003

OFFICE OF R&D NEWS



L to R:
Professor John Mackenzie,
Dr Julian Gale

PREMIER'S FELLOWS HOSTED BY CURTIN

The prestigious Western Australian Premier's Research Fellowships have been awarded to Dr Julian Gale and Professor John Mackenzie, both of whom will be hosted by Curtin. Curtin's Office of R&D supported the nominations of both Fellows, who were chosen from a field of 13 applicants.

Dr Gale is an internationally renowned scientist who has worked in material science and catalysis for more than 15 years. While at Curtin he will work within the Nanochemistry Research Institute in the Division of Engineering, Science and Computing. Professor Mackenzie is a scientist with an outstanding international

reputation in the field of microbiology and its impacts on public health. He was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2002 and recently led the World Health Organisation mission to China seeking information on SARS. His work at Curtin will be in the area of international health within the Division of Health Sciences.

The Western Australian Premier's Research Fellowship Program aims to attract excellent researchers to WA from overseas or interstate, to conduct research that is internationally competitive and of specific benefit to WA. Each Fellowship is worth \$1 million over four years.

Visit from University of South Australia

The Office of R&D recently welcomed visiting staff from the Research Services area of the University of South Australia, a fellow university of the Australian Technology Network. Visiting were Mark Hochman, Director, Research Services; Jayne Taylor, Manager, Research Degrees; and Mark Gorringer, ISO Quality Officer. The two-day visit afforded a valuable opportunity to benchmark and compare approaches to managing research and research training.

Western Australian Major Research Facilities (WAMRF)

Curtin researchers across a number of Divisions are participating in this new State initiative aimed at establishing a \$60 million research centre in Western Australia. The WAMRF program was established by the WA Government through the Office of Science and Innovation, and in conjunction with the Premier's Science Council.

Staff News

It is with regret that we advise that Shanti Gelmi will not be returning to Curtin after a period of parental leave. Further, Chester Cutinha has resigned to take up a coordinating role for COS at UWA, which will involve a continuing link to Curtin. We wish both Shanti and Chester well and thank them for their efforts.

Position Available

The Office of R&D is looking to second, for approximately three months, a staff member who will assume the role of Manager, R&D Special Projects. The appointee will conduct special projects in the area of R&D policy, project management and planning. An appointment is expected to be made at a level consistent with General Staff Level 8 or 9. Both General and Academic staff members are welcome to apply. Contact Dr Rod Thiele on ext 3854 by 12 September 2003.

FROM THE ACTING DVC

Universities across Australia anticipate a statement from the Federal Government, later this year, on a major restructuring of research funding to the higher education sector. To assist the Government in developing its funding plan, Curtin, like other universities, will need to participate in three major reviews of key aspects of research and development.

The timeline for the reviews is short and the Office of R&D, through the University R&D Committee, will be preparing responses during August and September.

The first review relates to collaboration between universities and publicly funded research agencies, in particular CSIRO, ANSTO, AIMS and DSTO. This review will provide an opportunity to carefully consider the extent of collaboration with these key agencies as well as issues such

as intellectual property, resources and infrastructure and the desirability of greater access to research funding through more contestable national processes. Curtin's recent joint ventures with CSIRO (such as ARRC) and AIMS (with James Cook University) open the way for new approaches to collaboration and the management of major national research activities.

The second review will focus on research infrastructure and the development of a nationally integrated research infrastructure strategic framework. This will provide the Federal Government with guidelines for future investment in major research facilities and equipment. The taskforce conducting the review held consultations with senior research managers and researchers in Perth during August. From the Curtin perspective, we have developed

nationally significant infrastructure in areas such as Applied Physics and there is a need for recognition of the costs associated with the development and maintenance of such facilities that benefit researchers and industry in Australia.

Finally, the Federal Government is reviewing the Knowledge and Innovation reforms in research and research training introduced in 1999. This review will focus on the effectiveness and efficiency of the Research Training Scheme (RTS), the Institutional Grant Scheme (IGS) and the Research Infrastructure Block Grants Scheme. These schemes provide over \$17 million annually to Curtin and at present the University allocations from the RTS and IGS are capped due to our strong recent research performance. The complexity of the RTS scheme will be a feature of many submissions to the



review. It is anticipated that the formula for allocating funds to the various schemes will be a major area of attention in the review.

The University is well-positioned to develop an even stronger research profile over the next few years and the outcome of these reviews will no doubt have far reaching impact on research funding and infrastructure development.

BARNEY GLOVER
ACTING DVC, R&D

IN THE NEWS

- » Dr Hoe Lee's research on developing a driving simulator to assess the driving behaviour of the elderly was featured on *The 7.30 Report* on Monday 8 August 2003, and in various print media in August.
- » In August, *Campus Review* published an article by Deborah Gare, Research Associate Curtin's Division of Humanities, that looked at Edward VII as an icon of middle-class masculinity in late-Victorian England.

GRADUATE STUDIES NEWS

- » The Annual Progress Reports were recently mailed to HDR students and their supervisors. The reports are due on 29 September 2003.
- » The UGSC recently approved the re-vamped *Guidelines for Essential Facilities for Higher Degree by Research Students* – now expanded into two documents, one for on-campus students and one for off-campus students. An optional *Consumables and Fieldwork*

Expense Application for Higher Degree by Research Students has been introduced to assist with student expense and reimbursement requests at the School/Department level. These documents can be found at www.curtin.edu.au/corporate/research/graduate/forms.html, listed under 'Essential Facilities'.

CRC UPDATE

Since the announcement of Round 8 Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) funding, Curtin staff have been progressing the establishment of those CRCs in which Curtin will participate. In the past three Newsletters, we have presented articles on six 'new' CRCs in which Curtin will be a core participant. In addition to those six, Curtin is also a core participant in two existing CRCs through additional funding for 'Supplementary' programs as described below.

The Coastal Zone, Estuary and Waterway Management CRC (Coastal CRC) is headquartered in Brisbane. The CRC provides decision-making tools and knowledge necessary for the effective management and ecosystem health of Australia's coastal zone, estuaries and waterways. The supplementary program will result in Curtin being involved for the first time in the CRC. The involvement will be through the Centre for Marine Science and Technology (CMST), which will provide research capability principally in the area of mapping marine habitats using acoustic techniques. Other participants in the supplementary project include UWA, Geoscience Australia, DSTO, Fugro Survey and Reson. Curtin's lead contact for this CRC, Professor John Penrose from CMST, can be contacted on ext 7380.

The A J Parker CRC for Hydrometallurgy (The Parker Centre) is headquartered at Murdoch University. Curtin has had a long-standing involvement in the CRC, which is now in its eleventh year. The CRC's activities span a cross-section of research on extractive hydrometallurgy, and Curtin participates through the School of Mines and Departments of Applied Chemistry and Chemical Engineering. The supplementary program will focus on chemical engineering related to 'hydromet'. Other participants in the CRC include CSIRO, the University of Queensland and a large number of companies in the minerals sector. Curtin's lead contact for this CRC, Professor Gordon Parkinson from Applied Chemistry, can be contacted on ext 3838.

PUBLICATIONS

The Office of R&D is about to publish an Information and Communications Technology Prospectus, profiling research capabilities in this area from across the University. For copies, call ext 7863.

UPCOMING EVENTS

ENRICHING POSTGRADUATE TEACHING AND LEARNING SEMINAR SERIES

The Office of R&D – with support from LIS and the Learning Support Network – will continue to present its popular monthly seminars for research students and staff. Upcoming Semester 2 seminars include:

- Supervising Postgraduate Research Students: Workloads and Stress Management
- Grant Applications: Getting Started
- Supervising Postgraduate Research Students: Mentoring and Student Motivation
- Research Involving Humans: What You Need to Know About Ethics

Research students and supervisors can register online at lsn.curtin.edu.au/seminars/series2.html

ALCHEMIES: COMMUNITY EXCHANGES (7TH ANNUAL HUMANITIES GRADUATE RESEARCH CONFERENCE)

Postgraduate researcher conference on community, conflict, crisis and change. 6-7 November 2003

For further information, call 4797 or email Marion.Pearson@curtin.edu.au

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENTS



Professor Daniela Stehlik

New Chair in Stronger Communities Appointed

Professor Daniela Stehlik was named inaugural Chair in Stronger Communities at the launch of the Alcoa Research Centre for Stronger Communities in July. Professor Stehlik comes to Curtin from Central Queensland University, where she is currently Associate Dean (Research). Her particular research interests include community capacity building and resiliency, intersections between social and rural policy development, and balancing regional industry and community goals.

Arts Research Showcase

In August, Professor of Sculpture David Jones addressed a panel of senators in Canberra as part of the Arts Research Showcase. Professor Jones spoke about the prize-winning *Tree Top Walk in the Valley of the Giants in Walpole, WA*, on which he collaborated with Donaldson and Warn Architects and Arup, Structural

Engineers. Professor Jones spoke about how this collaborative creative process contributes to arts research in Australia.

MERIWA Support for Curtin Projects

Professor Jonathon Majer of the Australia Centre for Mining Environmental Research will receive MERIWA support of \$19,000 to assist in research to review the innovative techniques used to promote the return of fauna to native ecosystems following mine rehabilitation. Cindy Barber, PhD student in the Centre for Petroleum and Environmental Organic Geochemistry, has gained funding from MERIWA for her work towards an integrated palaeo-environment reconstruction of the Perth and Canning Basins.

Applied Physics Achievements

Department of Applied Physics staff have been recognised for their significant contributions to the Commission of Atomic Weights and Isotopic Abundances, a Commission within the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry. Dr Bob Loss, Professor Kevin Rosman and Professor John de Laeter have amassed more than 32 years of membership between them, holding key positions in the Commission. Professors de Laeter and Rosman contributed significantly to the Commission's recent review article, "Atomic Weights of the Elements: Review 2000", which refers to 34 publications describing research carried out in Curtin's mass spectrometry laboratory.