

Science hub opens

Ministers laud university achievements

Microscopes, stethoscopes and lab coats were the accessories of choice at the opening of the University of Western Australia (UWA) Science Building on Monday 29 October.

Regional Development Minister Brendon Grylls and Education Minister Peter Collier, in Albany for a regional meeting of State Cabinet, jointly unveiled a plaque and lauded the achievements of the UWA Albany Centre.

Mr Grylls told the crowd that attended the opening that the opportunity to diversify the regional economy through such projects was absolutely vital.

"It is unique to have one of the top 100 universities in the world moving into a place in regional Western Australia in this way and that is a real feather in the cap of the Great Southern," Mr Grylls said.

"Remember that it takes much more than bricks and mortar to turn Albany into a hub of scientific excellence.

"It means attracting the right people, retaining the right people, becoming known for it; when you can land that then your community will really grow in the future," Mr Grylls said.

The \$6.2 million four-storey building was supported by \$1.5 million of Royalties for Regions funding through the Great Southern Regional Grants Scheme, along with funding from UWA, the Rural Clinical School, the Western Australian Department of Education and the Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

It hosts the Centre of Excellence in Natural Resource Management and the Rural Clinical School.

Mr Collier said the facilities were 'second to none'. "This building is testament to exactly where we need to go as a community and as a government," he said.

UWA Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) Robyn Owens used the opening to launch a new \$20,000 Travel Grants Scheme



CENRM Acting Director Dr Barbara Cook shows Regional Development Minister Brendon Grylls the view through a microscope connected to a display monitor. Photograph by Krysta Guille.

designed to increase the participation of academic staff from UWA campuses in Perth in the research activities of the UWA Albany campus.

Professor Owens said the scheme will provide up to \$1000 for staff to undertake collaborative research projects in the Great Southern, to supervise student projects for higher degrees by research, or to present a lecture series or public forum.

Each year at least \$20,000 will be provided for the scheme, which the university expects to sustain longer-term partnerships and collaborations between UWA staff in the Great Southern.

The Science Building launch was preceded by an open day during which members of the public were invited to tour the building.

Combined research and teaching facilities were on display, including a microscope linked to a display monitor to enable a group of students to see the specimen under examination.

Medical students from the Rural Clinical School showed visitors through the top floor of the building, which includes a medical library and clinical examination room.

Duane Schouten, ph. 9842 4888

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ROYALTIES
FOR REGIONS

Step towards SuperTown works

Katanning sets the stage

Work has started in Katanning on drainage improvements that will help to prepare the town centre for its SuperTowns transformation as laid out in the recently-released Growth and Implementation Plan.

Work now under way between Conroy Street and Piesse Dam is part of the GSDC's Town Centre Enhancement Program (TCEP), a million-dollar funding initiative of the GSDC that provided support for improvement projects in townships in each of the 11 local government areas in the Great Southern.

Royalties for Regions funding of \$150,000 through the TCEP supported Katanning's \$400,000 town centre drainage project.

The TCEP drainage work is distinct from the the SuperTowns program but it complements the proposed works outlined in Katanning's SuperTowns Growth and Implementation Plan.

Under the growth plan, Katanning will undertake an \$8.7 million town centre commercial and streetscape revitalisation that will provide a new civic and heritage

precinct in the centre of Katanning, a new town square and an upgraded entry from the Great Southern Highway.

The Growth and Implementation Plan was shaped by extensive community consultation and was launched by Wagin MLA Terry Waldron in November. It sets directions that will help Katanning to grow as Western Australia's population increases over the coming decades.

Contact: Jessica van der Waag
Ph. 9821 3211

Lake's new future under discussion

Residents talk on recreation

Katanning residents are having their say on the future recreational uses of Lake Ewlyamartup.

The degraded lake was identified as a priority project in 2010 by the Katanning Land Conservation District Committee (LCDC) and the GSDC helped to fund an Engineering Concept Plan to explore restoration options.

Building on the initial work, the GSDC is now administering \$45,000 in Tourism WA transition funding for the LCDC to prepare a Recreation Area Plan, together with \$15,300 through the Recreational Boating Facilities Scheme (received through the Shire of Katanning).

Recreational planning consultants Cardno recently undertook a community consultation day with Katanning residents representing a range of interests in the lake – from water-skiers to bird-watchers and Indigenous people.

A boat ramp, picnic facilities, toilets, boat trailer parking, interpretive signage, a safe swimming area, walk trails and a bird hide are among the elements that will be considered in the preparation of a draft Recreation Area Plan, which will be ready for community consultation in mid-January.



Consultant Jeff Allott leads community discussion about recreation at Lake Ewlyamartup.

Katanning Landcare Program Manager Ella Maesepp said visitors and locals should be able to enjoy the lake safely and comfortably.

"Lake Ewlyamartup is really important to the local people and popular with self-drive tourists, so it's wonderful that through this funding we're able to seriously commence the process of providing suitable and welcoming facilities," Ms Maesepp said.

Complementing the planning activities, a Department of Regional Development and Lands initiative called Living Lakes could help to improve the depth and quality of the water in Lake Ewlyamartup.

Lake Ewlyamartup was selected as one of three lakes in the first stage of the Living Lakes program, which assessed the feasibility, cost and community benefits associated with revitalising lakes in the Wheatbelt and Great Southern.

The work was completed in October and Lake Ewlyamartup was one of two lakes selected to proceed to the second stage of the program, which will include the production of detailed engineering designs and costings of the options identified in the first stage.

Contact: Ella Maesepp, ph. 9821 4327

Festival delights revealed

Exciting line-up for 2013 program

Theatre, music, literature, cinema and art are in store for audiences at the 2013 Great Southern Festival.

Perth International Arts Festival director Jonathan Holloway presented the 2013 program before an expectant audience at the Albany Entertainment Centre in November.

Mr Holloway said the 2013 program would excite Great Southern fans of the festival, which has been presenting PIAF performances since 2003.

The GSDC and the University of Western Australia initiated the festival and it is supported by \$225,000 of Royalties for Regions funding over three years through the Great Southern Regional Grants Scheme.

Mr Holloway announced a program featuring theatre pieces *A History of Everything* and *Invisible Atom*.

A History of Everything promises the 14-billion-year story of the universe in 90 minutes, and *Invisible Atom* is an epic tale reviewed as 'a marvel of 21st century storytelling'.

A History of Everything will be at the Albany Entertainment Centre, and *Invisible Atom* will be presented at the Denmark Civic Centre and the Albany Town Hall.

The Albany Town Hall will also host an exhibition of photography by the late Ed Smidt. Mr Smidt was a photographer for the Albany Advertiser in the 1970s and 1980s, and shot many memorable images of Great Southern life including coverage of the final years and closure of the whaling industry.

Musical performances in 2013 include classical guitarists Karin Schaupp and Pavel Steidl, the St George's Cathedral Consort, the Raah Project, jazz crooner Gregory Page and the New Orleans sound of Soul Rebels.



On hand for the launch of the 2013 Great Southern Festival program were, from left, GSDC Chief Executive Officer Bruce Manning, Great Southern program manager Rod Vervest, Perth International Arts Festival director Jonathan Holloway and former Lotterywest Chairman Lloyd Stewart.



Local band Limerick entertained the festival launch guests with traditional Irish music.

Katanning and Borden will host special screenings of prize-winning Ken Loach film *The Angels' Share*.

Twelve films feature in the cinema program, including Western Australian film *Satellite Boy* and titles from France, Germany, Denmark, Japan and Chile.

Apart from the cinema program, the festival will present screenings at the Albany Town Hall of Yagan, the story of returning the skull of 1830s Noongar warrior and leader Yagan to his home country. The Great Southern Festival also features the Carrolup Cultural Tour, and a Noongar and Koorie collaboration called *Bringing Bessie Flowers Home*.

Writers in the Great Southern Festival program include local authors Jon Doust and Dianne Wolfer, along with international authors Shamini Flint, Lawrence Norfolk, Steven Poole, Kevin Powers and Karen Thompson Walker.

The Playmakers program in 2013 features gypsy jazz guitar, with musical events at the Albany Town Hall and the White Star Hotel.

Great Southern Festival programs and tickets are available at the Albany Entertainment Centre or on-line at www.perthfestival.com.au.

Contact: Linsey McFarlane, ph. 9842 4888

CENRM voice in world fish farm forum

Great Southern scientist on international body

A Great Southern scientist will contribute to international efforts to ensure that food production through aquaculture, or fish farming, is sustainable and socially responsible.

Professor Peter Cook, of the University of Western Australia's Centre of Excellence in Natural Resource Management, was appointed in October to the board of the Aquaculture Stewardship Council and as chair of the Council's technical advisory committee.

Professor Cook is an internationally recognised abalone expert and is the only Australian representative on the Council.

Professor Cook said the world had a growing appetite for seafood but most natural fisheries were already over-exploited and

unable to expand, so sustainably farmed seafood was going to be the only solution.

"We are now more or less at the maximum sustainable yield of ocean-harvested fish," Professor Cook said. "There may be some less desirable species that haven't been exploited which might be possible to exploit a bit more, but realistically we are virtually at the point where we can't get any more fish out of the sea.

"The natural solution is to increase the fish via aquaculture. That's going to happen whatever the protagonists say - it's just not possible to stop it.

"So our task is, if it's going to increase, let's increase it in an environmentally sustainable way rather than letting it happen without the environmental

controls that need to be there," Professor Cook said.

The Aquaculture Stewardship Council is based in Netherlands and was founded in 2010 under the auspices of the World Wildlife Fund.

It aims to be the world's leading certification and labelling program for responsibly farmed seafood.

Professor Cook is a past president of the International Abalone Society and author or co-author of more than 100 publications in scientific and popular literature. His main research interests have involved the biology of mariculture species such as mussels, oysters and abalone.

Contact: Peter Cook, ph. 9842 0834

Trail facilities complete

Community effort applauded

Walkers, cyclists and horse riders exploring the Torbay Rail Trail can now make the most of easier access and creature comforts at the start and end of their journey.

Improvements to the trail access points in Elleker and Torbay were completed in early December.

Providing more attractive first impressions and a higher level of accessibility were key aims of the project, which included construction of a new ablution block at Torbay Hall with permanent opening and disabled access.

Water tanks were installed at both locations and the car parks were refurbished, with bays set aside for horse floats and trailers.

Royalties for Regions funding of \$65,000 through the GSDC's Regional Grants Scheme supported the \$386,000 project which was also aided by funding from Lotterywest and the Department



New facilities at Torbay Hall will cater for walkers, horse riders and Munda Biddi Trail cyclists.

of Environment and Conservation and supported by the City of Albany.

Torbay Catchment Group Chair Pip Tilbrook said the project had been a fantastic community effort, with several community groups contributing to ensure quality facilities were on offer to users of the Torbay Rail Trail and the Munda Biddi Trail.

"The Munda Biddi Trail is soon to launch and will attract large numbers of cyclists through the area linking in with the rail trail,

and visitors will be able to make the most of the new facilities on offer," Ms Tilbrook said.

"We feel very fortunate to have received funding which has allowed construction of facilities that can be utilised by the local community and visitors to the Torbay Rail Trail and Munda Biddi Trail. It has been a real community effort to complete this project with Elleker Progress and Sporting Association, Torbay Agricultural Hall Committee and our group all taking active roles.

"We would also like to thank the City of Albany staff for their support and for the assistance they have provided with completing this project to a high standard," Ms Tilbrook said.

The improvements will also benefit community groups and events using the Torbay and Elleker Halls.

Contact: Michelle Dayman, ph. 9842 4888

Travellers welcome at Gnowangerup

Facilities for caravans, motor homes

Gnowangerup has rolled out the welcome mat to caravan and motor home travellers with the opening of the Gnowangerup Progress Association's new travel stop.

The town can now accommodate up to 12 caravans or motor homes in a short-stay park with ablution facilities, located near the sports ground and within walking distance of the town centre.

Royalties for Regions funding of \$80,000 through the GSDC supported the construction of the \$287,000 travel stop.

Wagin MLA Terry Waldron opened the travel stop on Sunday 25 November.

Gnowangerup Shire President Kerry Stone said the town had previously been unable to offer appropriate facilities to travellers with caravans or motor homes.

Mrs Stone congratulated the Gnowangerup Progress Association for its initiative in undertaking the project.

"Other locations in the Shire of Gnowangerup could accommodate caravans and motor homes, but the town of Gnowangerup has been missing out until now," Mrs Stone said. "This fills a gap



On hand for the opening of the Gnowangerup travel stop in November were, from left, Gnowangerup Shire CEO Shelley Pike, Wagin MLA Terry Waldron, Noongar representative Aaron Wood, Progress Association president Mick Lance, GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle and Gnowangerup Shire President Kerry Stone.

and will encourage visitors to include time in Gnowangerup in their travel plans."

The design of the travel stop allows for later expansion to double its capacity. The travel stop project was also supported by Federal Government funding from the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism.

Coinciding with the opening of the travel stop, Gnowangerup also celebrated a formal opening of its Homes for the Aged project, which provided two

self-contained units for aged people needing low-maintenance accommodation but who are not ready for residential care.

Royalties for Regions funding of \$150,000 through the RGS supported the \$300,000 aged accommodation project.

Mr Waldron visited the Homes for the Aged to declare the facility open.

Contact: Jessica van der Waag
Ph. 9821 3211

Bus trip to summer fun

Wagin to Albany service in January

Young people from Great Southern towns are expected to once again hop on board the GSDC's Holiday Bus in January to enjoy some summer fun.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays in January for the past 10 years, the Holiday Bus has picked up teenagers from Wagin, Katanning and points south for a day trip to Albany, thanks to the support of the GSDC and the local governments along the route.

The service is provided to help Great Southern families provide healthy holiday activities for their children and costs only \$5 per trip.

In 2013, the Holiday Bus service starts on Tuesday 8 January and ends on Thursday 31 January.

Holiday Bus runs start at 7am in Wagin and passengers can board at towns along the Great Southern Highway, at the Kendenup Westrail stop on request, and at Mt Barker.

On arrival in Albany, the bus drops passengers at the City centre, the Albany Leisure and Aquatic Centre, the cinema and Middleton Beach. Transfers within Albany during the day can be arranged.

Return journeys start with pick-ups from

3.45pm at Middleton Beach and end at 7pm in Wagin.

Cargo bays on the 46-seat Nichols coach are big enough for BMX bikes, skateboards, body boards and surfboards.

Unaccompanied passengers must be 14 to 18 (consent forms required); younger teenagers and primary school-age children can use the service if accompanied by a responsible adult. In January 2012, the Holiday Bus service carried 231 passengers.

Contact: Kirstie Colbung, ph. 9842 4888

Volunteers honoured

Ambulance centre extension opened

St John Ambulance recently completed a substantial extension of its Mount Barker Sub Centre, turning it into a modern facility that will cater for the service's needs for 20 years.

Wagin MLA Terry Waldron opened the extensions at the beginning of December, and paid tribute to the work of the St John Ambulance volunteers involved in the Sub Centre.

Four volunteers received special acknowledgements at the opening, including Daphne and David Stewart who have each contributed 50 years volunteering for St John Ambulance.



Mount Barker's honoured St John Ambulance volunteers, from left, Daphne Stewart, Neil Crofts, Elsa Drage and David Stewart, have a total of 184 years of volunteering between them.

Mrs Stewart still contributes to the ambulance service by managing volunteer contacts in response to emergency calls.

Volunteers Elsa Drage and Neil Crofts were also honoured for their contributions over four decades or more.

St John Ambulance Mt Barker received \$65,000 of Royalties for Regions funding through the GSDC to support the final stage of the extensions, providing the fit-out for the upgraded kitchen, car parking, storage areas, training room, office, staff facilities and communal areas.

St John Ambulance fully funded the first two stages of the \$450,000 project that transformed the 1970s-built centre into a modern and functional emergency services and community facility.

Ambulance officers now have space to debrief and socialise, and the venue is better equipped for first aid training.

Contact: Christine Grogan, ph. 9842 4888

Multicultural Katanning in print

Case study of cultural diversity

Multicultural Katanning merits a chapter in a new book about sustainable growth in regional areas.

Regional Advantage and Innovation: Achieving Australia's National Outcomes is a publication of Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia (SEGRA), an Australia-wide network of organisations focused on economic activity in regional areas.

Katanning's story of cultural and linguistic diversity, fostered since the 1970s, is the subject of a chapter in *Regional Advantage and Innovation*, based on a paper delivered at the 2010 SEGRA conference by the GSDC and Regional Development Australia - Great Southern (RDA-GS).

Regional Advantage and Innovation was launched on 21 November at the 2012 SEGRA conference in Terrigal, New South Wales.

The Katanning chapter, co-authored by GSDC Regional Project Officer Jessica van der Waag, the Shire of Katanning and RDA-GS, is titled *A Case Study of Katanning: Innovation for Cultural Dividend*.

It describes Katanning's adaptation to cultural and language diversity in a fairly benign economic and social environment, resulting in the successful settlement of migrants from a wide range of backgrounds.

Katanning's response to successive waves

of immigration since the arrival of Cocos and Christmas Islanders in the 1970s was largely driven by the community with support from government and non-government organisations.

The community's constructive responses helped to secure the long-term productivity of Katanning's major employer, and led to the town's recognition as a successful community of cultural and linguistic diversity with benefits for the wider district.

Further research in 2013 will focus on the sustainability of this key feature of the Katanning community.

Contact: Jessica van der Waag
Ph. 9821 3211

All aboard for Kojonup visitors

Rail project offers countryside tour

A Perth Zoo icon is rolling through the countryside at Kojonup, taking tourists on trips to enjoy the area's history and natural attractions.

The former Perth Zoo train has been refurbished and modified by the Kojonup Tourist Railway to take tourists on trips through the Kojonup countryside.

Royalties for Regions funding of \$100,000 through the GSDC helped Kojonup's enthusiastic band of volunteers complete the \$417,000 project, which included converting the Perth Zoo train from road to rail, and refurbishing the rail line west of the town.

Wagin MLA Terry Waldron officially opened the Kojonup Tourist Railway on Saturday 6 October.

Visitors can now enjoy an eight-kilometre round trip starting at the town's heritage railway station building and taking in historic attractions and native bushland, viewing wildflowers in season.

Extensions of the track are set to continue with plans to create a 22km round trip to the historic Farrar Siding.

The service runs on the first and third Sunday of each month at 11am. For more information on the train timetable and future progress visit www.kojonuptouristrailway.com.au.

Contact: Jessica van der Waag
Ph. 9821 3211



Wagin MLA Terry Waldron (right) cuts the ribbon in front of the former Perth Zoo train, with Kojonup Tourist Rail vice president John Lewis (left) and president Ned Radford.

Award for early childhood program

Learning skills supported

Great Southern families have access to an award-winning early childhood program in the YMCA's A Smart Start, supported by \$660,000 of Royalties for Regions funding through the GSDC.

A Smart Start was recently honoured in the 2012 WA Children's Week Awards by being named the winner of the Department for Communities Regional Services Award.

Education Minister Peter Collier and Community Services Minister Robyn McSweeney presented the awards in October.

A Smart Start, run by the YMCA, provides

families with connections to community networks and support groups, and helps parents to develop skills to encourage learning within the home.

The aim is to enhance the early development of children up to four years old, with a special focus on disadvantaged families in regional and remote areas.

YMCA Smart Start manager Marilyn Lottering said the award recognised the hard work that had gone into ensuring families continued to receive the support needed to raise happy, healthy children.

"We are dedicated to assisting parents to

feel more confident in their role as their child's first educator," Ms Lottering said.

"This includes organising community events and the provision of a parenting resource manual with updated developmental milestones at six, 12 and 18 months, and each year up to four years."

Smart Start program coordinators Tracey Wilson and Sue Thompson received the award on behalf of the YMCA and the program.

Contact: Jessica van der Waag
Ph. 9821 3211

Better lookout for Anzac events

Albany prepares for centenaries

Visitors to Albany during the 2014 and 2015 centenaries of the town's Anzac connections will be able to view the townscape from a new Padre White Lookout on Mount Clarence.

A \$973,000 project to upgrade the existing lookout is about to start on the historic hill, providing a modern structure that will be more accessible to visitors.

Royalties for Regions funding of \$200,000 through the GSDC's Regional Grants Scheme supports the project, along with funding through the City of Albany.

The City of Albany recently approved a tender for the upgrade from Robinson Buildtech, which constructed the lauded Skywalk at Castle Rock in the Porongurups.

Upgrading the lookout is part of Albany's preparations for the 1 November 2014 centenary of the departure of the Anzac convoy of 36 troop transport ships and three battle cruisers from King George Sound en route for Egypt.

The troops trained in Egypt for several



Padre White lookout at the summit of Mount Clarence.

months and stepped into history on 25 April 1915 at the Gallipoli landing.

Albany will later mark the 100th anniversary of Anzac Day on 25 April 2015 with a focus on Padre White's 1923 foundation of the

Anzac Day Dawn Service, which included a time of observance at the summit of Mount Clarence overlooking the waters from which the Anzac troops sailed.

Contact: Duane Schouten, ph. 9842 4888