

# Adelaidean

News from the University of Adelaide

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Patients at the heart  
of cancer research

Celebrating 75 years  
of the Theatre Guild

**MAKING SURE  
NO CHILD IS LEFT BEHIND**



THE UNIVERSITY  
of ADELAIDE

# >ADELAIDEAN



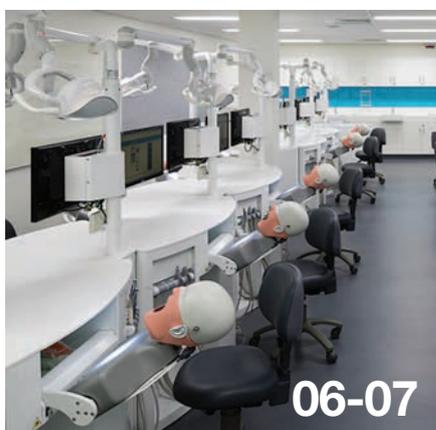
## INSIDE THIS EDITION OF ADELAIDEAN

A new personal approach to treating cancer being pioneered by University of Adelaide researchers is giving victims a second chance of beating the disease. And we talk to the lead investigator on a data linkage research project that could change the way we take care of the youngest children in our community.

Also in this edition of Adelaidean we hear from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic) on the state of higher education in Australia, we visit the impressive, new dental simulation laboratory and provide an insight into cutting-edge new technology called atomtronics.

We also celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Theatre Guild and talk to Anna Goldsworthy on her new role at the Coetzee Centre for Creative Practice.

You can find this and past editions of the magazine at [adelaide.edu.au/adelaidean](http://adelaide.edu.au/adelaidean)



06-07



10-11



12-13



22-23

## >CONTENTS

- |       |                                                |       |                                                 |
|-------|------------------------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 03    | Scholarship success for gifted students        | 12-13 | Theatre Guild celebrates 75 years               |
| 04-05 | Children the winners in data linkage project   | 14-15 | Food study for the gourmet traveller            |
| 06-07 | Simulation clinic fills gap in dental training | 16-17 | Melding music and words                         |
| 08-09 | A personal approach to treating cancer         | 18-19 | App proves a game changer for autistic children |
| 10-11 | The university funding paradox                 | 20-21 | Stop the chop                                   |
|       |                                                | 22-23 | A perfect measure of success                    |

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# SCHOLARSHIP SUCCESS FOR GIFTED STUDENTS



**Inspirational first-year students Georgina Morphett and Nicholas Banks have joined an elite group of Australians to be awarded a prestigious Charles Hawker Scholarship.**

Academically gifted and with a passion for improving the lives of others, both Georgina and Nicholas have won a residency at the University of Adelaide's St Mark's College.

Nicholas has the distinction of being the 100th recipient of the national scholarship which was introduced in 1990 in memory of pastoral pioneer and statesman Charles Allan Seymour Hawker.

"It's a real honour to be awarded the scholarship and to be given the opportunity to taste college life while at university," said Nicholas. "St Mark's is a great environment with its lifestyle and strong academic support program."

Georgina, 18, and Nicholas, 19, are two of just four students named Charles Hawker Scholars this year, together with Alice Dawkins and Tristian Delroy from Australian National University.

Both are studying Bachelor of Laws, with Nicholas also doing a Bachelor of International Studies and Georgina a Bachelor of Arts.

For students at the start of their higher education, both have impressive résumés.

A country girl from the upper Yorke Peninsula, Georgina has multiple interests including a strong passion for human rights, an area she wants to pursue in her future career.

She represents South Australia on the Federal Government's Australian Youth Forum Steering Committee, a role that takes her to various national events and brings her into close contact with School Education, Early Childhood and Youth Minister Peter Garrett.

She is also Deputy Chair of the Minister's Youth Council which provides policy advice to SA Minister for Youth Tony Piccolo.

A keen netballer, Georgina is also a qualified swimming and lifesaving instructor, and a nationally competitive sailor.

"Being awarded a Charles Hawker Scholarship is a great honour and the fact that the Trustees appreciate my values is humbling," said Georgina.

Nicholas is a champion debater and was national runner-up in the Plain English Speaking Awards, representing Australia at the international competition in London.

He's also had a long association with the scouts, achieving the highest Queen Scout Award and last year was named one of the three most outstanding scouts in the Asia-Pacific region.

Also in 2012, Nicholas returned to Africa for the second time through his work supporting The Kalahari Experience, an ongoing project to improve education and health in remote southern Africa.

Together with Georgina, he was a member of the South Australian Youth Parliament and they were each awarded the prestigious Governor of South Australia SACE Commendation.

Each scholarship is worth up to \$45,000 over three years, making it one of the most generous privately funded scholarships available to Australian undergraduate and postgraduate students. ♥

**TOP** Georgina Morphett, first-year student

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"Being awarded a Charles Hawker Scholarship is a great honour and the fact that the Trustees appreciate my values is humbling."

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# CHILDREN THE WINNERS IN DATA LINKAGE PROJECT

A UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE PROJECT TO LINK INFORMATION FROM MULTIPLE GOVERNMENT DATABASES COULD HAVE MAJOR BENEFITS FOR CHILD HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT AND THE DELIVERY OF SUPPORT SERVICES.

**For the past three years Professor John Lynch has been steadily navigating his way through an administrative jungle.**

He's been liaising with multiple government agencies, talking with lawyers and ethics specialists, dealing with technology experts and lobbying leaders in health and education.

The subject – making better use of the masses of government data on child health and development.

From the time a child is conceived and during key stages of life, various federal and state agencies are collecting data.

Such information provides valuable insights into a child's progress and supports the delivery of government services. But there is one major flaw in the system – none of these separate packages of information is linked.

“Currently systems don't talk to each other because governments don't have integrated data systems,” Professor Lynch said.

“Consequently, tracking the longer-term success or otherwise of new programs in public health and education, and assessing the impacts they are having on children, is very difficult.

“What we're doing is providing the links to identify groups of kids who aren't doing well, finding out how we can help them better prepare for school and giving them more life chances. That's really at the core of what this is all about – and it's a very efficient way of doing it.”

A trained epidemiologist and Professor of Public Health at the University of Adelaide, Professor Lynch began his work on the Early Childhood Data Linkage Project after being awarded funding through a prestigious National Health and Medical Research Council Australia Fellowship in 2009.

His project has now been given an additional \$273,131 from the Federal Government's Partnerships for Better Health program plus \$180,000 from State Government partners.

It's a whole-of-population study which captures more than 240,000 children up to the age of 13 born in South Australia since 1999.

Professor Lynch is also one of the leads on a mirror project in the Northern Territory which has a particular focus on indigenous communities and involves about 4000 children.

In total the project is linking together data on cohorts of children from 13 separate state and federal sources.

It covers the perinatal period, health facts about the mother and data collected through the Child and Family Health Programs, any hospitalisation or emergency admissions, and results of four-year-old health checks at kindergarten involving health, growth, vision and hearing.

Then it takes in data collected from the school readiness census for the Australian Early Development Index and information from the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) conducted in years 3, 5, 7, and 9 at school.

All these sources help develop a broad picture of each cohort covering health, social and emotional development, and cognitive, language and general knowledge.

A major appeal of the project is that it re-uses and adds value to publicly funded data which already exists.

“By linking the data we'll have a local evidence base to inform how health, child development and early education services direct their efforts to where they are needed most to have the greatest impact,” he said.

“Ultimately it's about supporting children's healthy development which is important for their readiness to learn and academic achievement at school.”

While it sounds a great outcome, Professor Lynch has had to step through a quagmire of legalities and ethical issues to reach this stage.

“The plan is that the database is updated and keeps growing each year, but it has been common that ethics approvals are time limited and data sets have often been destroyed once the original purpose has been filled,” he said.

“We've been working hard with ethics panels to impress on them that is for the public good and that because we're adding so much value it doesn't make any sense to destroy them.

The fact that all data is de-identified has been instrumental in overcoming objections. The focus is on general patterns of development among child cohorts and not on individual progress.

“We're not interested in identifying individuals, that's not what this is all about.”

A defining feature of the project is that it merges data from two levels of government, including agencies within SA Health and the State Department for Education and Child Development, and also the Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Gaining access to those databases takes time and considerable trust-building with the individual data custodians. The project team must also be mindful of the quality of the data which was not collected for research purposes.

“We've been receiving cooperation from the highest level from the Premier, Ministers and chief executives – they get it and are very supportive,” Professor Lynch said.

“However, we've had a mixed bag of support further down which is why the past three years have been so important in building trust with custodians.”

Professor Lynch now has a team of about 10 researchers working on the project, some located within the government agencies.

“Most of the data is in and we're hoping to get some analysis done and have some quick wins,” he said. “The end goal is to try and create a national system – and that opens up all sorts of possibilities.” ♥

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“Ultimately it's about supporting children's healthy development which is important for their readiness to learn and academic achievement at school.”

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# SIMULATION CLINIC FILLS GAP IN DENTAL TRAINING

DENTISTRY AND ORAL HEALTH STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE CAN NOW PERFECT THEIR SKILLS IN A CLINICAL ENVIRONMENT USING THE LATEST SIMULATION TECHNOLOGY.



An advanced \$6 million Dental Simulation Clinic has opened in the School of Dentistry to give students hands-on experience with the technologies and techniques found in a modern clinical setting.

School Dean, Professor Johann de Vries, said the new clinic had placed Adelaide at the forefront of dental training in Australia.

“Not only is it exciting and wonderful for students and staff, but practising dentists in the State also think it’s fantastic,” he said.

“I’ve been inundated with the most positive emails from dentists since the opening. It’s a new hub for the entire dental profession and a great facility for ongoing professional development.”

Professor de Vries has overseen some extraordinary advances in his profession since the days of his own training more than 40 years ago.

“We used to practice our skills on an old head-on-the-stick – we called them ‘phantom heads’,” he said.

The contrast with the new facility couldn’t be greater. It is in fact a series of mini clinics featuring everything contained in a real clinical environment – and more.

There are an impressive 95 individual simulators, including four of the latest 3D virtual reality haptic simulators.

“There are dozens of practice and treatment stations, each with a simulated patient, and computers providing education material,” Professor de Vries said.

“The haptic technology provides immediate tactile feedback to students while performing their different tasks. Students also have access to the latest audio visual equipment which further enhances their learning experience, and there’s even a vending machine which dispenses teeth.”

The clinic was made possible by a \$2.8 million grant from Health Workforce Australia, with additional funding from the University and the South Australian Foundation for Dental Education and Research.

Dental students will spend more than 550 hours in the simulation clinic as part of their curriculum, while Bachelor of Oral Health students will receive more than 300 hours of simulation training.

The Australian Dental Council has also started using the facility to assess the skills of international dental graduates.

Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Warren Bebbington, said the clinic setting was perfectly aligned with the University’s focus on ‘small-group discovery’ under the new Strategic Plan, Beacon of Enlightenment.

“Small-group discovery is critical to the future success of our students and it is something which we feel has been lost in a great many research universities,” he said.

“The Dental Simulation Clinic is a perfect environment to foster the intensity and curiosity that go hand-in-hand with such small group learning. It is a highly flexible space, ideally suited to clusters of students who can work with each other at individual stations, while being mentored by our academic staff.”

Professor Bebbington said directed and self-directed learning would be tailored at the clinic which supports different modes of education.

“This facility will be instrumental in developing the all-important clinical skills needed by students and will directly benefit the oral health of communities right across Australia in future years.”

LEFT & ABOVE Inside the new Dental Simulation Clinic

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“This facility will be instrumental in developing the all-important clinical skills needed by students and will directly benefit the oral health of communities right across Australia in future years.”

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# A PERSONAL APPROACH TO TREATING CANCER

CANCER SUFFERERS ARE BEING GIVEN NEW HOPE BY UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE RESEARCHERS WHO ARE COMBINING THEIR DIFFERENT SKILL SETS TO DISCOVER ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF TACKLING THE DISEASE.

Five agonising years watching his elder brother's long and painful struggle with cancer shaped a young Paul Neilsen's future.

He was just 10 when Brad contracted Ewing's sarcoma, a rare and aggressive bone cancer which afflicts mostly young people.

Witnessing traditional treatments ultimately fail his brother – who died at the age of 18 – Paul made a vow to research new avenues to treat the disease.

His journey eventually brought him into contact with Professor David Callen who is the inspiration behind the Centre for Personalised Cancer Medicine (CPCM) at the University of Adelaide.

As the name suggests, the centre is taking an individual approach to cancer care and finding out why some people respond to treatments in different ways.

It's a multi-disciplinary research program which is giving individual patients new hope when standard treatments such as chemotherapy, radiotherapy and surgery are no longer effective.

The research team has world-leading strengths in areas such as blood cancers and solid tumours, particularly breast, lung, and melanoma, and treatments for symptom control.

Thanks to the input of Dr Paul Neilsen, the CPCM is also providing exciting new therapeutic options for sarcoma.

"While the same standard treatments are being provided for various cancers now as they were back 40 years ago, today we're working on a whole range of new targeted therapies which can be applied if the patients don't respond to the currently available treatments," he said.

"What we're trying to do is look at the different aspects of cancer and tailor the care and treatment for each individual."

The research scope of the CPCM is broad, and aims to personalise the patient journey from prevention and treatment to rehabilitation and palliative care.

The CPCM is also working closely with the recently opened Cancer Genomics Facility in Adelaide.



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“What we’re trying to do is look at the different aspects of cancer and tailor the care and treatment for each individual.”

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Recent advances in genomics sequencing are giving researchers new insights into the development of tumours, enabling them to identify key mutations which are unique to individual patients.

These differences are among the main reasons why some patients survive and others die despite receiving the same standard treatment. The goal is to find specific pharmaceutical agents to target these different mutations.

“Our centre now reflects the trend towards a new, individualised approach to cancer medicine, taking into account genetic variations between people and their reaction to specific drugs,” Professor Callen said.

“While still in the developmental stage, there are enormous resources being poured into DNA sequencing overseas and it looks like we will follow this lead in Australia.”

Before the CPCM was established different areas of cancer research were spread across the University. Now there is close-knit collaboration involving people from quite different specialist fields, including surgeons,

clinicians, scientists, medical chemists and physics experts involved in areas such as sensing.

Dr Neilsen’s work on sarcoma is typical of the approach.

He oversees the Sarcoma Research Group and works closely with clinicians in the analysis of individual tumours.

His team has developed a novel method of growing fresh, patient-derived sarcoma specimens in the laboratory to test their sensitivity to new treatments – and some of the results are extremely encouraging.

Ewing’s sarcoma is a particularly aggressive cancer which afflicts mainly male teenagers. The mortality rate is 40 per cent increasing to 90 per cent for patients with metastatic or recurrent disease.

Within the next few years Dr Neilsen plans to begin clinical trials to provide other treatment options for patients with this disease who haven’t responded to the standard therapies.

“When my brother was fighting sarcoma he didn’t have that second chance.” ♥

**ABOVE** Dr Paul Neilsen with patient Lyn Dolman

**Professor Pascale Quester, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic) of the University of Adelaide, gave a damning critique of the Federal Government's proposed cuts to university funding during a speech to the Committee for Economic Development of Australia. This is an edited version of her address.**

I love Australia. I love it for its youth, its energy, its humour, its cosmopolitan vibe and irreverence, its fair-go mentality and, by and large, its tolerance. Tolerance of new people and of new ideas. But, I regret to say, there is also tolerance for weird and plethoric government structures, and structurally short-term political vision.

Not least amongst the paradoxes is this one: Australia is a country where farmers are perceived as national heroes for growing the food and meat necessary to feed future mouths but where teachers, whose fields are our young and whose crop is human capital, are awarded very little respect. A country where mining companies have more influence on government policy than universities where knowledge is invested into young minds in order to yield years of innovation, better decision-making, and more articulate social debate.

Some may argue that recent government action demonstrates that, in fact, Australia values education highly. After two years of consultation and analysis the country is set to spend millions on what is now known as the Gonski reforms. But beyond the symbolism, the corollary to this investment has been a cut to the funding of universities.

A year ago I reported that funding per capita was already greater in state schools than it was in universities. And in low socio-economic status areas, funding per student was almost double that of universities. Since then, Bradley and Lomax-Smith both advocated a necessary lift in university funding, their advice falling on deaf ears.

Gonski advocates, quite rightly in my view, that more should be done for school students. His voice has not only been heard but also taken up with gusto by our government. But what Gonski never said was that in order to achieve this, a reduction in per capita funding for each university student was an acceptable price to pay.

He did not say it because, quite frankly, no one in their right mind would say this. This is like encouraging farmers to grow more and better products on their farms, and then cutting the road and the infrastructure that would allow them to go to market in order to reap their full potential value.

Research has conclusively demonstrated time and time again the positive spill over of a more educated population, from greater individual income and consumption, to higher national levels of productivity and innovation.

Gonski tells us to invest more into schools and if this does indeed deliver better literacy, numeracy and analytical skills in all 17 years old citizens, then what a great investment. But will these young articulate minds want to stop there and why exactly would we want them to do so?

So the greatest paradox of the Australian education system is this: stepping out of year 12 is, in this country, like falling on the other side of the mirror. No longer a nation building purpose, education becomes a service sector and a source of foreign income.

What was, up to year 12, a worthy cause for taxpayer investments becomes, clearly and very suddenly, an unacceptable burden on the public purse, so much so that those lucky enough to get it will have to pay it back, and in full.

If universities can't afford to support their costs, then perhaps governments of neighbouring countries, including some so poor they can't afford a university system themselves, should be made to cough up to support young Australians who want a degree.

And when universities dutifully comply and recruit more international students, then a huge compliance framework is imposed by government, along with expensive quality assurance systems. As a result teams of 40 to 50 people are commonly employed by universities just to document processes and reply to surveys designed in Canberra to 'monitor' the system.

But wait, there is more! As well as wanting higher education to be a profitable export sector, Australia also wants more, not fewer, of its own young people to go to universities. In fact it has set the ambitious target that 40 per cent of its citizens aged 25 to 34 will have a bachelor degree by 2025.

The education system in Australia will thrive if all of its parts work together. That means improved schools should lead to improved universities. More resources in one can't make sense without more resources in the other. They both serve the same purpose: to future-proof the country by growing and adding value to what is fundamentally any country's most precious asset: its human capital.

Perhaps more importantly, it will thrive if it operates in the right environment. And this must surely be an environment where education is treated with the full respect it deserves.

Why is it that in Australia, when you introduce yourself as a university lecturer, you almost have to apologise? I have been in this country for over 20 years now but every time I visit my native France, I am struck by just how much status and respect the mention of a university position earns you there.

What sort of country are we to show so much disrespect for intelligence? What is it in the culture of this place, one that is proud of its fair dinkum stance on most things that you can pick on universities without creating a popular backlash? As a nation, we have much to be proud of, but our approach to education, and our treatment of universities, is certainly not one of them.

The University of Adelaide will probably have to cope with shortfalls stepping up to \$20 million per annum by 2015. If this nation wants world ranking universities, if it wants to educate the citizens it needs for a brighter future, if it wants the innovation and progress that comes with university-led research and development, then it must be prepared to invest more, not less, in universities. ♥

A portrait of Professor Pascale Quester, a woman with short reddish-brown hair, smiling. She is wearing a black and white patterned jacket over a pink and blue patterned scarf. Her arms are crossed, and she is wearing a watch on her left wrist. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

# THE UNIVERSITY FUNDING PARADOX

**LEFT** Professor  
Pascale Quester,  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor  
and Vice-President  
(Academic)

# THEATRE GUILD CELEBRATES 75 YEARS

THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE **THEATRE GUILD** HAS ENJOYED MANY HIGHS AND SUFFERED SOME SERIOUS LOWS DURING A SOMETIMES TUMULTUOUS HISTORY. DESPITE THE CHALLENGES THE GUILD HAS SURVIVED TO **CELEBRATE ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY** – AND IS AS ROBUST AND VIBRANT AS EVER.

Like the hundreds of actors who have graced its stage, the Theatre Guild has performed many splendid roles since its first show back in 1938.

It was a time when cinema was flourishing and Adelaide, with a population of just 325,000, was struggling to attract commercial theatre productions from interstate and overseas.

To help fill the void the University of Adelaide threw its support behind the creation of a not-for-profit community Theatre Guild.

It was an inspired decision taken at a time when the world was on the verge of war and when no other Australian university was supporting broad-based theatre ventures.

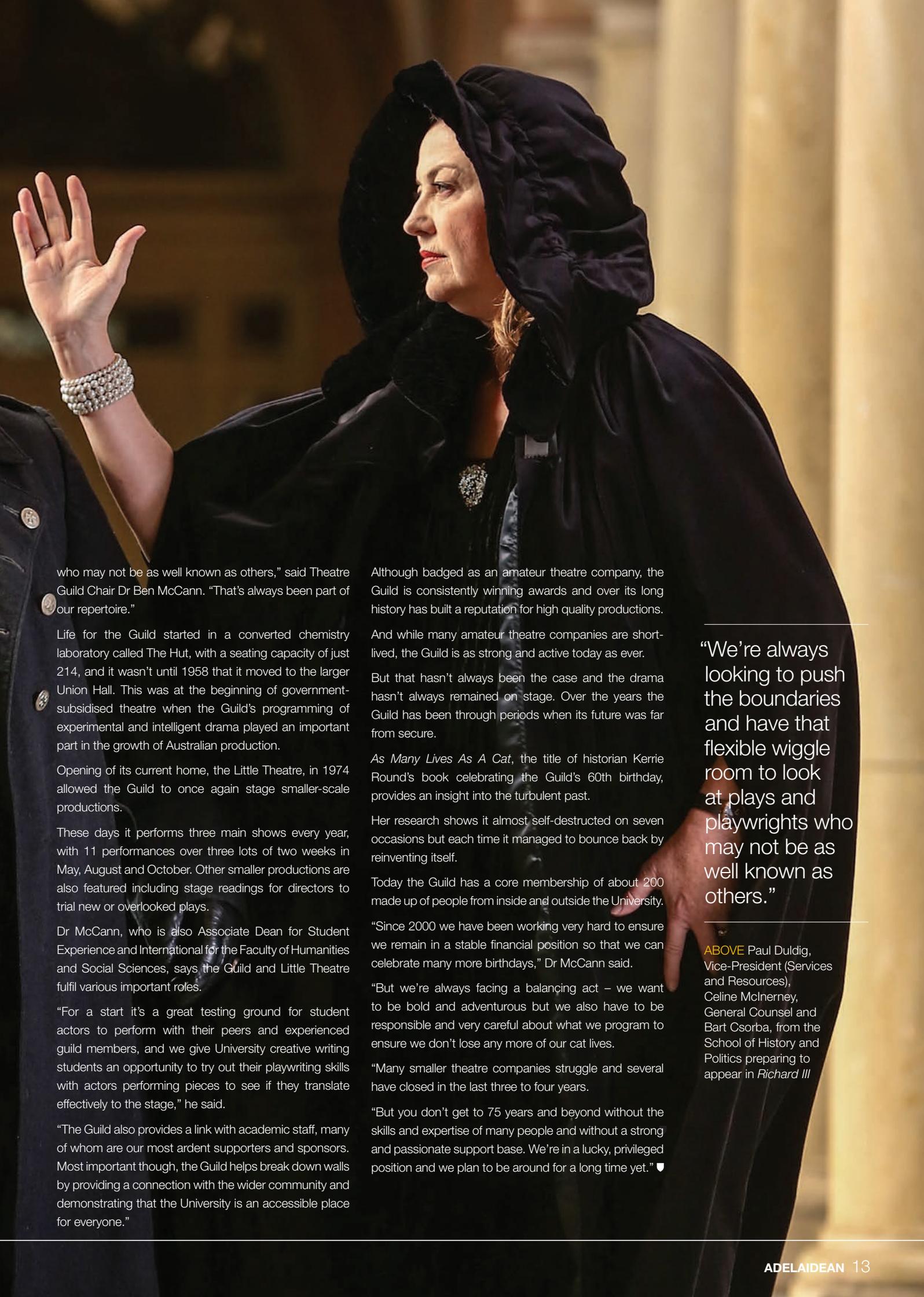
But the Guild flourished and has become an integral part of university life for thousands of students and staff and a vital link to the broader community.

Over the past 75 years it has staged more than 350 productions – each involving 30 to 40 people onstage and backstage – and it continues to be a key focal point for amateur production in the city.

The Guild has the distinction of being the only South Australian theatre company to regularly perform Shakespeare – *Richard III* is currently in rehearsal – and it has a great tradition of supporting Australian playwrights. Indeed, the 2013 season also includes works by Michael Gow (*Away*) and Andrew Bovell (*Holy Day*).

Some of Patrick White's first plays were premiered by the Guild, including his most personal production, *The Ham Funeral* in 1961, followed in later years by *Season at Sarsaparilla* and *Night on Bald Mountain*.

"We're always looking to push the boundaries and have that flexible wiggle room to look at plays and playwrights



who may not be as well known as others,” said Theatre Guild Chair Dr Ben McCann. “That’s always been part of our repertoire.”

Life for the Guild started in a converted chemistry laboratory called The Hut, with a seating capacity of just 214, and it wasn’t until 1958 that it moved to the larger Union Hall. This was at the beginning of government-subsidised theatre when the Guild’s programming of experimental and intelligent drama played an important part in the growth of Australian production.

Opening of its current home, the Little Theatre, in 1974 allowed the Guild to once again stage smaller-scale productions.

These days it performs three main shows every year, with 11 performances over three lots of two weeks in May, August and October. Other smaller productions are also featured including stage readings for directors to trial new or overlooked plays.

Dr McCann, who is also Associate Dean for Student Experience and International for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, says the Guild and Little Theatre fulfil various important roles.

“For a start it’s a great testing ground for student actors to perform with their peers and experienced guild members, and we give University creative writing students an opportunity to try out their playwriting skills with actors performing pieces to see if they translate effectively to the stage,” he said.

“The Guild also provides a link with academic staff, many of whom are our most ardent supporters and sponsors. Most important though, the Guild helps break down walls by providing a connection with the wider community and demonstrating that the University is an accessible place for everyone.”

Although badged as an amateur theatre company, the Guild is consistently winning awards and over its long history has built a reputation for high quality productions.

And while many amateur theatre companies are short-lived, the Guild is as strong and active today as ever.

But that hasn’t always been the case and the drama hasn’t always remained on stage. Over the years the Guild has been through periods when its future was far from secure.

As *Many Lives As A Cat*, the title of historian Kerrie Round’s book celebrating the Guild’s 60th birthday, provides an insight into the turbulent past.

Her research shows it almost self-destructed on seven occasions but each time it managed to bounce back by reinventing itself.

Today the Guild has a core membership of about 200 made up of people from inside and outside the University.

“Since 2000 we have been working very hard to ensure we remain in a stable financial position so that we can celebrate many more birthdays,” Dr McCann said.

“But we’re always facing a balancing act – we want to be bold and adventurous but we also have to be responsible and very careful about what we program to ensure we don’t lose any more of our cat lives.

“Many smaller theatre companies struggle and several have closed in the last three to four years.

“But you don’t get to 75 years and beyond without the skills and expertise of many people and without a strong and passionate support base. We’re in a lucky, privileged position and we plan to be around for a long time yet.” ♥

“We’re always looking to push the boundaries and have that flexible wiggle room to look at plays and playwrights who may not be as well known as others.”

ABOVE Paul Duldig, Vice-President (Services and Resources), Celine McLnerney, General Counsel and Bart Csorba, from the School of History and Politics preparing to appear in *Richard III*

# FOOD STUDY FOR THE GOURMET TRAVELLER

A study exchange to France is a special feature of a new food culture and history program developed by leading food historian Barbara Santich.

There's more to food than simply cooking and eating.

Start digging into food history and culture and it turns into a huge topic which touches multiple disciplines and subjects, not to mention numerous career opportunities.

One of Australia's leading food studies academics, Professor Barbara Santich, has successfully captured the multi-layered aspects of food history and culture in the University of Adelaide's new Graduate Program in Food Studies.

It's a program which delves into historical as well as current issues relating to food and drink and, for some students, an opportunity for a study exchange to France.

A specialist in French food culture and cuisine, Professor Santich has linked with the Université François Rabelais (UFR) in Tours for Adelaide students to complete part of their masters studies through courses in the Histoire et Culture d'Alimentation program.

"It's a wonderful chance to be part of UFR's Master's program which is run in partnership with the highly respected European Institute of Food History and Culture," Professor Santich said.

"We've agreed that every year a maximum of eight students can exchange – four from each university – once they have completed at least 12 units of course work to the required standard."

Professor Santich has researched food history and culture in French archives and worked with French scholars whose approach to the study of food is, she believes, subtly different compared to many other parts of the world.

"Australia is more aligned with the English and American mode of study while the French look at the subject from a slightly different philosophical viewpoint.

"Where we refer to 'food history' and 'food culture' their terms are 'alimentation' and 'alimentaire', placing the emphasis on eating rather than the product itself - and it is important to remember that it's only when food is eaten that its nutritional and symbolic values can be realised."

Students nominating for the UFR exchange need to be competent in French, although some of the courses may be conducted in English. French assignments can also be written in English and are marked by staff at the University of Adelaide.

To ease the cost, Adelaide students can apply for financial assistance worth \$2300 through a Baudin Travel Grant. Their University of Adelaide course fees cover all study costs at UFR.

The three-month study exchange also includes time for some travel and sightseeing.

There are no restrictions on what topics the Adelaide students can study within the French program, although Professor Santich says the most appropriate courses are usually run at the beginning of the year.

Interestingly, Professor Santich's attraction to food was sparked by her early study of biochemistry. It was the start of a 30-year journey which has resulted in numerous academic publications and six books. Her latest, *Bold Palates: Australia's Gastronomic Heritage*, was published last year.

She has used this wealth of experience, including her expertise in food writing, in developing the Graduate Program in Food Studies, now coordinated by Associate Professor Rachel Ankeny.

Courses within the program provide a general appreciation of food and drink culture and history from ancient times to present, including an in-depth understanding of current issues.

Professor Santich says it's ideally suited for people wanting a big picture perspective as it encompasses numerous disciplines such as history, anthropology, sociology and geography within the general area of humanities and social sciences, as well as touching on nutrition, agriculture, wine studies and tourism.

"The program is designed to open up various food-related career opportunities in areas such as teaching in a culinary school, a restaurateur, food or drink journalist, or working in areas such as marketing, hospitality and tourism." ♥

RIGHT Professor  
Barbara Santich



# MELDING MUSIC AND WORDS

Growing up in Adelaide Anna Goldsworthy was convinced she would have to make a painful choice – music or writing.

She was struggling with the notion that it was “possibly wrong” to commit her life to both her passions, it had to be one or the other.

“Being a concert pianist is demanding and you have to be absolutely committed to your instrument and the discipline,” she said. “Then I just gave up trying to decide. I realised I needed both because each nourished and inspired me. I tried to find a way to make it work.”

Anyone following Dr Goldsworthy’s career knows she succeeded – and at the highest level.

An award-winning classical pianist and writer, Dr Goldsworthy’s creative endeavours successfully straddle both music and literature.

But her talents were effectively lost to Adelaide until the University of Adelaide took the unusual step of establishing the J.M. Coetzee Centre for Creative Practice – a cultural hub of intellectual excellence which aims to dissolve barriers separating the two disciplines.

It was a creative opportunity Dr Goldsworthy couldn’t resist and she returned to Adelaide after a 17-year absence to take up a two-year position as Research Fellow at the centre.

“When this popped up I found it quite bizarre because the two practices don’t normally go together – and this was all happening in my home town,” she said.

Her return has allowed Dr Goldsworthy to renew work with her great friend, teacher and mentor Eleonora Sivan, the Russian migrant pianist who taught at the Elder Conservatorium.

Ms Sivan has her own idiosyncratic and poetic way of describing music, an approach which inspired Dr Goldsworthy’s award-winning memoir *Piano Lessons* and also *Maestro*, the book which won great acclaim for her father, Peter Goldsworthy.

Both books have been adapted as plays with Anna Goldsworthy taking to the stage as piano soloist and to perform her own words when *Piano Lessons* tours

Queensland in July. It’s the perfect medium for her to express that intersection between literature and music.

Dr Goldsworthy’s research at the Coetzee centre takes the form of creative practice and she has multiple projects underway involving both her chosen disciplines.

During 2013 she is performing in the Seraphim Trio Series under the umbrella of the centre at Elder Hall. She takes full advantage of the concert performances to introduce the spoken word to engage the audience.

“My own personal belief as a classical musician is that you have to be not just an advocate for your music but also to some extent an evangelist,” she said. “That sounds a bit fanatical but I do feel a strong ambassadorial responsibility to classical music.”

Dr Goldsworthy is also co-ordinating a colloquium called *Last Words* with composer Andrew Ford in October, a libretto for Victorian Opera’s new production *The Magic Pudding* and is directing the Port Fairy Spring Music Festival.

On the writing side she is assisting with the planning of the 2014 J.M. Coetzee Symposium under the auspices of the J.M. Coetzee Centre for Creative Practice, releasing a new memoir *Welcome to Your New Life* and has just finished a major Quarterly Essay on misogyny, for Black Inc.

She has also just started work on a new Chopin project and is setting herself the challenging goal of conveying musical thought in words.

“What I’m seeking to do is find a way of mapping through language the physical experience of playing Chopin,” she said. “I’ll be trying to find a language which is musical as well as physical – a sort of choreography of the hand.”

“I’m not yet sure whether we’ll be focusing on a particular musical text such as the Chopin Études or whether it will be a general survey of his music and aspects of his pianistic approach.”

Dr Goldsworthy said there may also be an opportunity to record a CD. ♥



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“My own personal belief as a classical musician is that you have to be not just an advocate for your music but also to some extent an evangelist.”

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LEFT Dr Anna Goldsworthy



ABOVE Dr Neil Kirby

“Overall there’s good evidence of improvements with some children moving into the normal range for particular behaviours, which is quite significant.”



# APP PROVES A GAME CHANGER FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN

Children diagnosed with autism are being taught better social skills through new video modelling techniques being used by Autism SA and evaluated by University of Adelaide researchers.

In the latest breakthrough, a social skills app has been launched after it was shown to improve the social behaviour of 90 per cent of eight to 12-year-olds who participated in a group-based program.

Dr Neil Kirby, a Senior Lecturer and Director of the Disabilities Research Unit at the University's School of Psychology, said a rigorous evaluation of the program had clearly demonstrated its benefits.

"Overall there's good evidence of improvements with some children moving into the normal range for particular social behaviours, which is quite significant," he said.

"That doesn't necessarily mean they are functioning normally in every respect – and it doesn't work for everybody – but we've confirmed such an approach can be very successful. There's tremendous scope for further development."

The University is in the fifth year of a partnership with Autism SA to evaluate an iModelling Project funded through \$720,000 in grants from the Telstra Foundation.

About 135 children aged 8 to 16 have been assessed in groups of up to eight by Dr Kirby and his team since the program started.

Children with autism show social skills disorders of varying degrees which makes it hard for them to interact with people. This places them at risk of social isolation and problems later in life.

Video modelling involves filming the behaviour of autistic children and then editing the video to show only appropriate behaviours. The child is then encouraged to watch the video repeatedly to learn how to interact with others appropriately, which in turn helps improve self-confidence.

The new autism app was designed by Adelaide-based developer Mighty Kingdom and works on an iPad, iPhone or iPod Touch. It's designed to be easier to operate than normal video technology.

Using the internationally accepted Social Skills Improvement System, University of Adelaide researchers in the Disabilities Research Unit tested children who have been using the app at home and in weekly group classes over the past 12 months.

Among the key findings is that 80 per cent of children show improvements in social engagement, such as joining in activities, initiating conversations, making friends and interacting appropriately with others.

Significantly, 62 per cent of those participating in the group-based program increased their engagement social skills to within the band for typically-developing peers without autism, and problem social behaviour scores decreased for 80 per cent of the children.

"The program was particularly effective for younger children," Dr Kirby said. "We also found that children in the program and their parents gained a greater understanding of autism and felt less isolated from the community."

The research team is now looking at follow-up studies to establish if improvements from the iModelling Project translate into improved classroom behaviours at school and if parents are still noticing the benefits of the program two or three years later.

"I would also be very keen to see the project extended for use in schools where I think it has great potential," Dr Kirby said. "Appropriately modified versions of the program might start as early intervention at kindergarten to prepare them for school and then at each transitional stage as the child moves to high school and then post-school activities." ♥



# STOP THE CHOP

CORNELIA KOCH, A SENIOR LECTURER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE LAW SCHOOL, ARGUES THAT CIRCUMCISION OF UNDERAGE BOYS SHOULD BE DISCOURAGED.

'Will he be vaccinated?' 'Will he be circumcised?'. These were among the routine questions that the midwife asked my partner and me shortly after the birth of our baby boy in 2010. Even in our slightly dazed state as new parents, we found the second question rather bizarre, exchanged a surprised look and answered with a definitive 'No!'.

As we are both from continental Europe, it seems peculiar to us to even consider cutting a piece off a tiny, wonderfully complete newborn. 'You would not cut the tip of his finger off either, would you?' was the question that went through our heads.

On the European continent, non-therapeutic male circumcision is virtually unheard of, except if it is done for religious reasons, which occurs mostly in Muslim and Jewish communities.

The situation is of course different in Australia, where non-therapeutic circumcision of baby boys was a routinely performed mainstream procedure for a significant period of time. In the 1950s about 85 per cent of newborns were circumcised, in the 1970s the rate dropped to about 50 per cent and today the circumcision rate in underage boys is between 10 and 20 per cent. It is estimated that around 50 per cent of all males living in Australia today are without foreskin.

While fewer and fewer parents choose to have their young boys circumcised, it is still a culturally accepted practice in Australia. The most common reasons put forward by proponents are potential health benefits for the child, their sexual partners or the general public, religious reasons or broader cultural reasons such as 'looking like your peers', 'looking like the other males in your family' or 'being preferred by women'.

For non-indigenous Australians, the origins of this practice lie in Victorian England, where circumcision was promoted for medical reasons. Over time, the procedure was believed to prevent or cure many 'conditions', for example, epilepsy, malnutrition, tuberculosis, impotence, sterility, masturbation and venereal disease.

While any connection between circumcision and conditions like these has been discredited, some still promote circumcision of young children on medical grounds today, particularly to prevent urinary tract infections, penile cancer and the contraction of some sexually transmitted diseases. Notably, the American Academy of Pediatrics released a new policy statement on male circumcision last August in which it moved from a neutral to a more positive stance on newborn male circumcision, arguing that the health benefits listed above outweigh the risks associated with the procedure.



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“It should be left to the boy to make an informed decision about whether he would like to lose his foreskin when he is old enough to decide.”

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However, most medical bodies in developed countries, including in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, take the opposite view. They do not recommend circumcision because they believe that the potential benefits of the procedure are outweighed by the associated risks. Serious medical complications caused by male circumcision are rare, but they include fistula formation, the loss of all or part of the penis and even death. More common side effects are post operative bleeding and infection.

Australian law takes a laissez faire approach to underage circumcision. It is perfectly legal to circumcise little boys. While public hospitals in all states except Queensland have stopped offering procedure, it is still financially supported by the Federal Government through the Medicare Benefits Scheme. This is despite the fact that Medicare's own guidelines state that benefits are not payable for 'medical services which are not clinically necessary' or for 'surgery for cosmetic reasons'.

The majority of medical opinion suggests that circumcision is not medically necessary for a person living in Australia, except if there is a pressing medical need in his individual case. Therefore, the surgery can be regarded as one done for cosmetic reasons. I therefore believe that the procedure should be removed from the Medicare Benefits Scheme.

In my view, circumcision of underage boys should be discouraged for reasons of personal autonomy. It should be left to the boy to make an informed decision about whether he would like to lose his foreskin when he is old enough to decide. Under South Australian law, the age of consent to medical treatment is 16 years.

However, younger children can also validly consent if their doctor believes that the child is capable of understanding the nature, consequences and risks of the treatment and that the treatment is in the best interest of the child's health and wellbeing. Another medical practitioner must support this opinion.

The law therefore offers ways for 16-year-olds or even younger males to decide for themselves whether they would like to be circumcised, after weighing up the arguments for and against the practice. Why should we take this right from them by cutting off the foreskin when they are too young to protest in a legally relevant way? Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child that Australia states that in all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child shall be of primary consideration.

Based on the medical knowledge available today and the fact that personal autonomy is an important value in Australian society, the best interest of boys is served by allowing them to determine their own circumcision status, rather than making an irreversible decision on their behalf when they are too little to say 'no!'. ♥

# A PERFECT MEASURE OF SUCCESS

THE UNIVERSITY'S NEW CHAIR OF **EXPERIMENTAL PHYSICS** HAS MOVED TO ADELAIDE WITH HIS RESEARCH TEAM TO PURSUE **ATOMTRONICS – CUTTING-EDGE NEW TECHNOLOGY** TO MAKE SUPER SENSITIVE INSTRUMENTS.

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“A major thrust of our work with IPAS is to translate the outcomes of the laboratory into everyday society. That’s something that’s really quite special and one of the reasons we chose to come here.”

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**RIGHT** Professor Andre Luiten

In Andre Luiten’s complex world of ultra-sensitive precision instruments you could well argue that small means big – very big.

Develop clocks and oscillators with unbelievable levels of accuracy down to the tiniest degree and you have the means to test the very foundations of modern physics and our grasp of the cosmos.

It sounds out of this world and the new Chair of Experimental Physics and head of the Precision Measurements Group Professor Luiten is certainly not interested in half measures.

The award-winning scientist has relocated to the University of Adelaide from Western Australia with just about his entire team to continue his groundbreaking work in partnership with Professor Tanya Monro, Director of the Institute for Photonics and Advanced Sensing (IPAS).

The relocation was made possible with the support of a \$1 million South Australian Research Fellowship.

The seven scientists who have moved from the University of Western Australia – some with families – have brought with them \$2 million of testing equipment and combined grant funding of an additional of \$1.5 million.

Professor Luiten, who is also Theme Leader of the Novel Light Sources science theme within IPAS, says the state funding and new state-of-the-art laboratories in The Braggs building will enable his team to take its research to another exciting level.

“I always felt we were very isolated in Perth so being part of a larger entity will allow us to translate our research into something of practical benefit for humanity,” he said.

“The work of Professor Monro in IPAS is very complementary to ours so together we can do some really great things.”

Professor Luiten’s research group is involved in wide-ranging laser technologies to allow incredibly accurate measurements never previously possible – and with instruments small enough to fit in your pocket.

The work cuts across multiple industries and has the capacity to revolutionise technologies such as radar, provide ultra-sensitive detection of trace gases for industrial or medical applications, and build small ultra-high performance clocks.

A key focus area is the emerging technology of atomtronics – a new way of manipulating ultra cold matter to make super sensitive measurements.

This may all sound rather esoteric, but consider GPS – technology which just about everyone now uses in their smartphones and navigation devices, and which has provided huge economic benefits.

It’s a system which could not work without precision measurements – in this case, highly accurate atomic clocks.

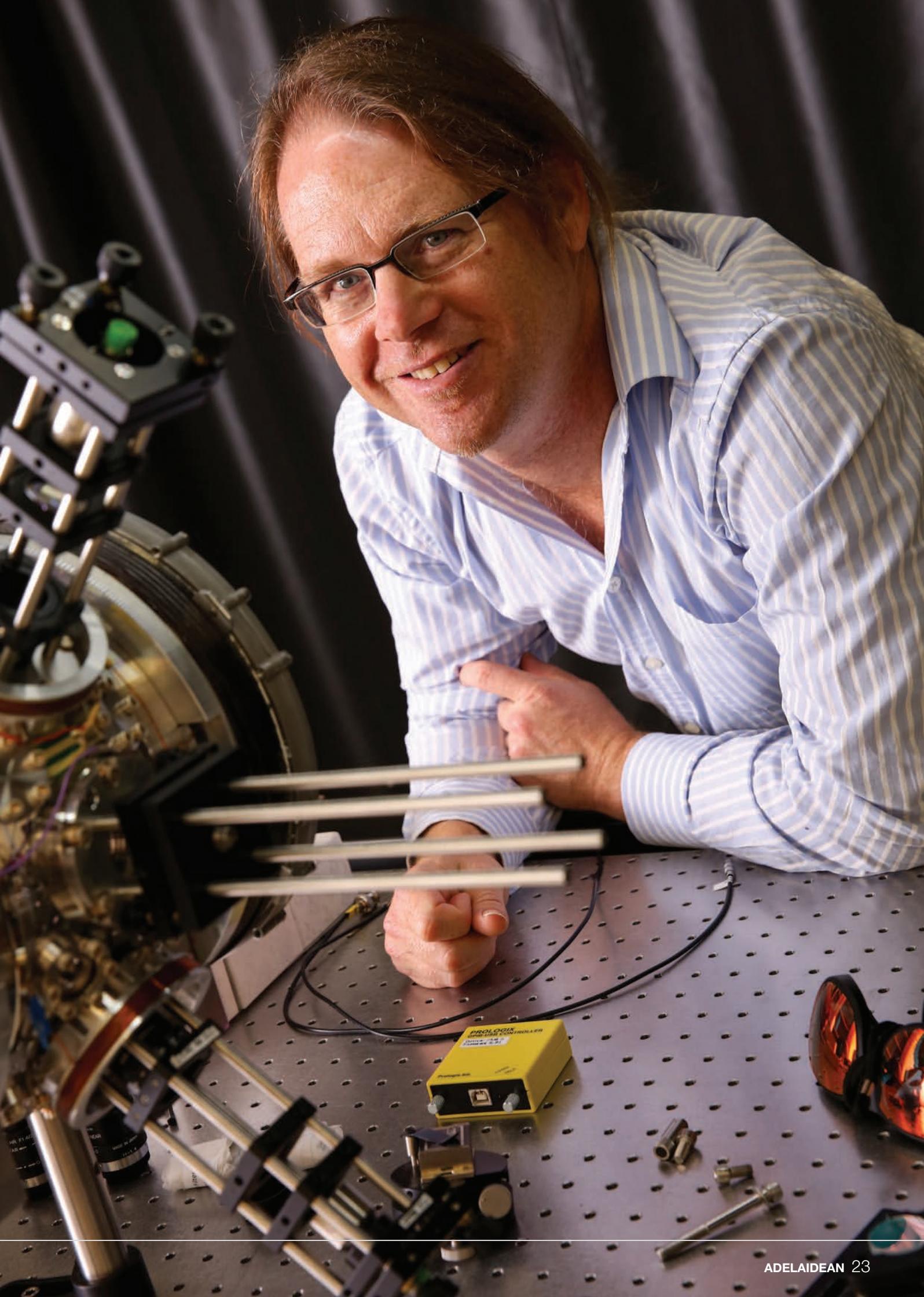
Among his credits Professor Luiten has developed a sapphire oscillator microwave clock accurate to an incredible one second every 100 million years.

The instrument was used to make the most sensitive test yet of one of the founding theories of modern physics – Einstein’s Theory of Relativity.

It’s groundbreaking work which has seen Professor Luiten recognised both nationally and internationally.

In 1997 he won the Bragg Gold Medal for Physics for the best PhD thesis by a student from an Australian university and he was the inaugural WA Young Scientist of the Year. He is also an ARC Future Fellow and the recipient of a NIST Precision Measurement Grant, the first time the prize has ever been awarded outside North America.

“A major thrust of our work with IPAS is to translate the outcomes of the laboratory into everyday society,” he said. “That’s something that’s really quite special and one of the reasons we chose to come here”. ♥





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