Flinders University academic staff and students were recognised widely for their achievements and successes in 2012, none more so than Professor Karen Reynolds, named SA Scientist of the Year. This highest accolade capped earlier recognition for Professor Reynolds, Director of the Medical Device Research Institute, including being named in the Top 100 Most Influential Engineers in Australia (2012), Fellow of the Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (2011) and Australian Professional Engineer of the Year (2010).

Staff

- Three researchers, Associate Professor Peter Catcheside, Professor Mark Halsey and Dr Anna Ziervogel received prestigious Future Fellowships from the Australian Research Council, securing $2.18 million to fund their research over the next five years. Research supported by the fellowships extends across the areas of cardio-respiratory medicine, criminology and primary health.
- Flinders staff received six Citations for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning from the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching (formerly ALTc). The Citations went to Associate Professor Marinaella Marmo (Law School), Dr Peter Speck (School of Biological Sciences), Associate Professor Eileen Willis (School of Medicine), Professor Don Dells (School of International Studies), Associate Professor Gour Diawara and Dr Udaya Saiika (School of the Environment) and the Yunggorendi First Nations Centre for Higher Education and Research.
- The Asia Pacific Palliative Care Program, delivered in Singapore as a partnership between Flinders’ Department of Palliative and Supportive Services, the National Cancer Centre Singapore and the Asia Pacific Hospice Network, won an Australian Award for University Teaching.
- Professor Joe Shapter, Dean of the School of Chemical and Physical Sciences, was awarded the Desire2Learn Innovation Award in Teaching and Learning by the Canada-based Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. Professor Shapter, the only one of five recipients working outside a Canadian university, received the award for his “vital role in the creation of a new and exciting degree program in the field of nanotechnology.”
- Flinders medical scientist, Associate Professor Damien Keating, won the inaugural Leading Light Award from the Australian Society for Medical Research (ASMR). The award recognises mid-career health and medical researchers with the aim of highlighting the outstanding research work being undertaken in South Australia.
- The History Council of South Australia named Professor Eric Richards SA’s first-ever Historian of the Year for his significant contributions to historical knowledge at the local, national and international levels.
- The outstanding contribution by Dr Arthur Van Deth to the success of Flinders’ Master of Hospital Administration taught in China has been acknowledged with a national award. The International Education Association of Australia awarded Dr Van Deth the International Education Excellence Award for Best Practice / Innovation.
- Dr Rachel Poppeka Filicoff was honoured as South Australia’s Tall Poppie of the Year for 2012 for her work analysing ochre to gain insights into Indigenous Australian culture.
The University decided to make its single largest investment in new infrastructure since the inception of the Bedford Park campus with a $110 million commitment to the Tonsley Park redevelopment. A state-of-the-art building to house the School of Computer Science, Engineering and Mathematics will be the centrepiece of teaching, research, and business investment activities aligned with the high-value manufacturing vision for the site. As the new home for the University’s Medical Device Partnering Program and the Centre for Nanoscale Science and Technology, and being co-located with TAFE, the Tonsley project will allow the University to further develop some of its key strengths in collaboration with education and industry partners. Up to 2000 students and 150 staff are expected to move into the new building in early 2015.

Flinders’ engagement with Malaysia was strengthened with the graduation of five students from the first Flinders HELP University psychology degree. The programme is delivered in Kuala Lumpur with staff and student support provided by Flinders and with full accreditation from the Australian Psychological Accreditation Council.

Commemorations of the Flinders Law School’s 20th anniversary included a rare sitting by the Supreme Court of the campus with Justice Tom Gray considering a challenge to compulsory voting at elections. Given the importance of the issue and widespread public and media interest, Justice Gray allowed television networks to film the proceedings, a first for South Australia’s media.

The former SA Premier, Mike Rann, joined Flinders as a Professorial Fellow and, with a series of lectures given students some unique insights into the politics of parliamentary and party politics. Professor Rann, who also published a collection of commentaries online, takes up the position of Australian High Commissioner to London in 2013.

Monsgir David Cappo, former Social Inclusion Commissioner, accepted a position as senior research fellow in the School of Social and Policy Studies, and joined the public debate over austerity measures being imposed by governments around the world.

A dedicated Mathematical Sciences Laboratory will lead mathematical research and innovation in five key areas—analysis, biomathematics, continuum modelling and environmental applications, discrete mathematics, optimisation and operations research, and statistics and stochastic modelling.

One of the leading visual effects companies in the world, Rising Sun Pictures, joined forces with Flinders to offer an intensive 10 week course in digital special effects. Adelaide-based Rising Sun has provided special effects and computer generated sequences for such blockbusters as The Hunger Games and Prometheus, and for films in the Harry Potter series.

Flinders collaborated with a private sector partner, Study Group, to establish the Flinders International Study Centre (FISC) to attract international students to Adelaide. FISC will provide Foundation and Diploma level programs for students who seek to qualify for, and enrol directly in, Flinders undergraduate courses.

Thousands of people visited Flinders for the unveiling of a bust of Aristotle to mark the launch of the LIOS2 Australian Centre for Hellenic Language and Culture during the Dimitria Festival. The Centre, funded by the South Australian Government with additional support from the Greek Government for student scholarships, will focus on the promotion and preservation of the Greek language and culture. Flinders is the only University offering the full suite of courses online and is working with Charles Darwin University in Australia. Griffith University and international universities have shown interest in collaborations. The support of the Hellenic Studies Foundation and the Greek community provides a model that could influence teaching and learning in languages generally.

The University’s premier public event, the Investigator Lecture, returned to the campus in 2012 with a capacity crowd hearing Dr Brian Schmidt explain that the expansion of the universe is accelerating, research that earned Dr Schmidt and his two colleagues the Nobel Prize for Physics in 2011. Dr Schmidt also inspired several hundred students at the Australian Science and Maths School and a group of postgraduate students and staff at Flinders during his visit to the campus.

The Sidney Myer Chair in Rural Education and Communities, Professor John Halsey, made significant contributions to the national public policy debate over education with his advocacy for funded, semester-length rural placement for all final-year pre-service teachers and aspiring leaders. Professor Halsey also argued that sustainable rural communities are vital to Australia’s wider viability in terms of food production and would be at risk if rural schools were not properly supported. Sidney Myer lectures were held in Adelaide and Mt Gambier.

Flinders’ profile in regional South Australia was raised significantly with the University’s sponsorship and engagement in the Advantage SA Regional Award’s for Education. Designed to recognise innovations in education and encourage participation in education at all levels, seven awards presentations were held throughout the State with Professor Halsey and the Director of Marketing and Communications, Ms Diane Ranck, involved in judging and presenting the awards.

Teaching and Innovation

Community and Alumni Engagement

Flinders’ engagement with TAFE SA on a new entry pathway designed to make it easier for students to gain both a vocational qualification and a degree with the launch of a DualOffer program for 2013.

Flinders’ strengthening role in higher education in Asia was underscored by a record 407 students graduating with a Masters of Arts (International Relations in Economy and Trade), Master of Hospital Administration at Nankai University, and the first graduations in Hong Kong of students completing a Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting) or a Bachelor of Creative Arts (Digital Media).

In Adelaide, a total of 2,239 students graduated in April and 1366 graduated in December. The University awarded four honorary degrees to artist and teacher, Tom Gleghorn, Deputy Northern Territory Administrator, Dr Patricia Miller, Australia’s Chief Nurse and Midwifery Officer, Dr Rosemary Bryant, and businessman and University Council member, Mr Nick Begakis, for their extensive services to higher education and society. Three students from the Ministry of Finance in Timor Leste graduated with Masters degrees from the Flinders Business School. The graduates are the first from a group of 23 Ministry of Finance staff studying at Flinders.

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Research Success

A novel technique developed by forensic science and analytical chemistry students and staff—in which paper fibres were extracted under a microscope using a tungsten wire and tweezers with super-fine points—has the potential to revolutionise forensic and medical investigations which usually require much larger samples. The research, undertaken by student Brodie Matthews and published in the prestigious journal Forensic Science International, has earned the recognition of the National Institute of Forensic Science which recently named it Best Case Study published in 2011.

Postgraduate creative writer supervisor and author, Dr Ruth Skare received a $46,000 grant from the Australia Council to write a personal biography of flamboyant former South Australian premier Don Dunstan. Dunstan’s literary custodian of the Don Dunstan Collection and previously unpublished material, including the manuscript of a novel by MW Dunstan, will make a major contribution to the biography.

Gastroenterologist Professor Graeme Young received a $1.5 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to fund a research project aimed at alleviating diarrhoea and malnutrition in developing countries through enhanced absorption of zinc.

Flinders was successful in receiving a total of $6.2 million in National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) funding for 13 projects spanning a diverse range of research areas including eye disease, sleep, anaemia, dementia, fever, eating disorders, drug-to-drug interactions, and Internet-based information services for cancer sufferers.

University researchers will share a pool of $3.3 million in Australian Research Council Discovery and Linkage Infrastructure Equipment and Facilities (LIEF) grants in 2013. Flinders received $2.75 million for seven Discovery projects—including a Discovery Outstanding Researcher Award to Professor Vladimir Gattoggio—and a further $440,000 for two LIEF grants. In addition, a series of cross-institutional collaborations worth a combined $1.6 million have been awarded to six projects involving Flinders researchers.

The highly successful collaboration between Flinders and Anglicare continues with ‘research to practice’ seminars addressing problem gambling, affordable housing, Indigenous engagement and building resilient communities. Two joint research projects are also examining dementia and homelessness and a partnership between Anglicare and the Flinders Law School will see students learning how to promote understanding of the issues involved in recognition of Indigenous people in the Australian Constitution.

The University’s first cotutelle student, Carol Anne Hartwick, commenced at Flinders and will study the Obesity Prevention and Lifestyle (OPAL) program, a local childhood obesity prevention program originally developed in France. The PhD student’s research will be supervised by Flinders and her home institution, Paris Descartes Sorbonne, under Flinders’ new cotutelle agreement, a collaborative study exchange that allows doctoral degree students to live and learn abroad and be awarded a joint degree.

The Hexapod Robot, developed by a joint Flinders University and University of Adelaide engineering team, won the SA Engineers’ Engineering Excellence Award. The robot, based at the Medical Device Research Institute at Flinders, was developed to enhance understanding of the 3D performance of normal and diseased joints and their artificial replacements by simulating complex joint motion.

Construction of the $8 million Biology Discovery Centre was completed and, with its three-storey ecosystem, will provide a unique learning and research space for the School of Biological Sciences. A number of penguins will join kookaburras and longbeaks in the Centre’s ‘eco-dome’ which is wired for sound and visuals with ‘freed foods’ transmitted to the first floor animal behaviour laboratory.

The Flinders Centre for Innovation in Cancer, headed by leading academic pharmacists, Professor Ross McKinnon, was formally commissioned by the Minister for Health, John Hill.

A breakthrough on the potential anti-skin cancer properties of the tropical fruit mangosteen earned PhD candidate Jing Wai Wang, a place in the SA finals of a prestigious medical prize, the Australian Society for Medical Research’s Ross Wishart Memorial Award.

Distinguished Staff

Flinders honoured a group of its most eminent professors with the inaugural award of the title of ‘Matthew Flinders Distinguished Professor’—the new title given to the University a formal mechanism to recognise and reward exceptional members of professional staff for their teaching, research and leadership, each have been admitted at their respective professional academies. The first Matthew Flinders Distinguished Professors are:

- Fran Baum [School of Medicine]
- Neil Brewer [School of Psychology]
- Marcello Costa [School of Medicine]
- Margaret Davie [School of Law]
- Dean Forbes [Deputy Vice-Chancellor International and Communities]
- Lain Hay [School of the Environment]
- Mary Leusz [School of Psychology]
- Richard Malby [Executive Dean, Faculty of Education, Humanities and Law]
- Karen Reynolds [School of Computer Science, Engineering and Mathematics]
- Sue Robinson [National Institute of Labour Studies]
- Sharyn Roach Ardle [School of Social and Policy Studies]
- Marika Tiggesmann [School of Psychology]
- Graham Tulloch [School of the Humanities]
- Graeme Young [School of Medicine]

Flinders continued to attract academics of the highest calibre through the Strategic Professorship Program, commenced in 2011, with a further five joining the University in 2012 from prestigious universities both overseas and in Australia. They included:

- Professor Justine Smith: Strategic Professor of Eye and Vision (formerly of Oregon Health and Science University)
- Professor Mark Taylor: Strategic Professor of Biomedical Engineering, (University of Southampton)
- Professor Olke Bateellie: Strategic Professor of Hydrology (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)
- Professor Julian Myrick: Strategic Professor of Creative Arts (a La Trobe University, Melbourne Theatre Company)
- Professor Andrew Coolidge: Strategic Professor of Criminology (University of Wollongong)

A Strategic Professor of Coastal Environments will commence in 2013.

The second stage of an initiative to create education-focused positions, giving excellent teachers and educators the opportunity to change the traditional mix of teaching and research and spend more time with students, was extremely successful with 48 staff opting to take up these positions. Flinders now has over 50 education-focused positions.

Professor Craig Simmons, Director of the National Centre for Groundwater Research and Training, was awarded the inaugural Shultz Chair in the Environment, supported by the DH Shultz bequest. Along with his leadership of the NCGRF, Professor Simmons made an influential contribution to the public policy debate over the future of the Murray Darling Basin, and was appointed to chair the Federal Government’s Coal Seam Gas Advisory Panel.

The first two scholars from the United States—Professor Howard Schweber (University of Wisconsin), Madison—and Professor Malcolm Feeley (University of California, Berkeley)—visited Flinders to occupy the Fulbright Flinders Distinguished Chair in American Political Science, which was awarded by the Australian-American Fulbright Commission to the University for the period 2011-2016.

Flinders attracted Mo Gill Track, a leading academic manager from the University of the West of Scotland, to play a key role in the University’s strategic and operational planning in the role of the inaugural Vice-President (Strategy and Planning).