

SAM HERITAGE



SYDNEY'S CAMPUS IN
TRANSFORMATION

ANCIENT LATIN AND
GREEK, ALIVE AND WELL

A RABBI WHO'S GREAT
AROUND THE KITCHEN

INVESTMENT DECISIONS
GONE WRONG

A profile view of a woman's head wearing a dense EEG cap. The cap is covered in numerous small, circular electrodes, each with a number. A thick bundle of white wires extends from the back of the cap. The woman has a neutral expression and is looking slightly to the right.

A good night's
sleep research



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Inside Australia's leading sleep research facility



The biggest ever gift, set to transform health education



Designs for making the University more accessible

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TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

SAM Heritage celebrates the fact that alumni speak their minds. We would love to hear your feedback about this publication and your ideas for future editions via sam@sydney.edu.au

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Dr Maria Comas Soberats
is a molecular
chronobiologist
working with the
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The Anderson Stuart
Building under
construction in
1883. Supplied
by the University
of Sydney Archives.
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Inside back cover:
The Anderson Stuart
Building in 2016,
is the home to
the Discipline
of Anatomy and
Histology. Photo
by Irenaeus Herok

CHANCELLOR'S WELCOME



Thank you for your positive responses to the first *SAM Heritage*, published just over a year ago. I am delighted to welcome you to our second issue. It has been a very full year, during which we have launched the Australian Institute for Nanoscale Science and Technology; commenced implementation of our *2016–20 Strategic Plan*; and completed several noteworthy building projects around the University including the new world class Business School and Queen Mary student accommodation. These are just a few of the University's myriad achievements.

We recently announced plans for another transformative facility, enabled by an incredible gift from Susan and Isaac Wakil. They are the same generous couple who last year recognised

the importance of nurses through providing 12 annual scholarships. This time, the Wakils have donated funds for the construction of a centre that will deliver enhanced teaching, learning and research capabilities across all the health disciplines.

Our health is all important. Those who research and battle disease and who treat and care for us are vital to our community. The University of Sydney's new Susan Wakil Health Building will encourage multidisciplinary, interfaculty learning, collaboration, and the cross-fertilisation of ideas. Staff and students will benefit immensely – and so, ultimately, will our entire community. Working together, we will make a real and enduring difference.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *SAM Heritage*.

Belinda Hutchinson AM,
Chancellor
BEc Sydney, FCA



AWAKE TO POSSIBILITIES

Sleep aids concentration, good health, memory and possibly even maintaining your weight. So the Sleep and Circadian Research Group studies how more people can sleep the night away, writes George Dodd.

Sleep. We all do it. We don't all do it well. And according to Professor Ron Grunstein (MD '95 MBBS '80), some of us keep ourselves awake worrying about it.

"Telling people they must get eight hours' sleep creates insomnia," he says with a smile. How much sleep to get is the question Professor Grunstein is asked more than any other.

"It varies," he says. "Most people sleep from six-and-a-half to eight hours a day. You wouldn't call lack of sleep 'insomnia' unless it really affects how you work and live. That happens to about 10 per cent of the population."

There was a time when the treatment for

insomnia was old-style sleeping tablets with what the experts term their 'dirty effects' of grogginess and memory loss. "The new sleeping tablets are much more targeted and less dirty," says Professor Grunstein. "They have their place, but now it's more about changing behaviours that affect sleep."

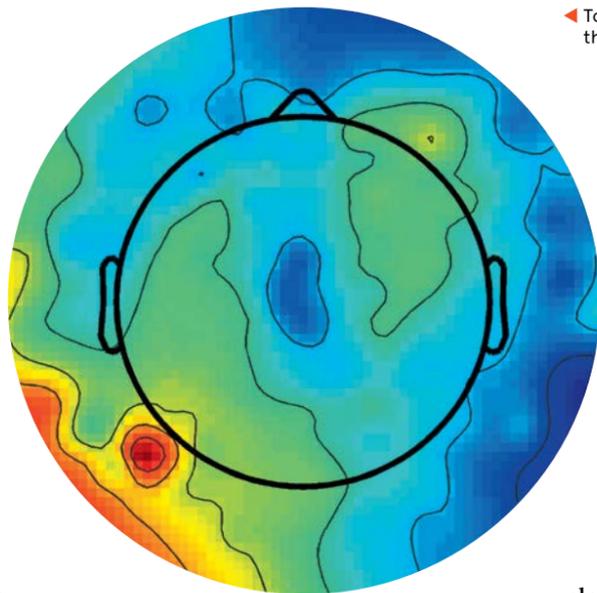
Physiologically speaking, sleep is a team effort, with agents such as melatonin, cortisol and orexin lowering us into sleep or lifting us into wakefulness. It's an arrangement that can easily go awry from factors such as stress, illness, alcohol, caffeine, medication or the blue-light stimulation of device screens before bed.

Insomnia is the most common sleep disturbance, but it's not the only reason people come for overnight stays at the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research, which is affiliated with the University of Sydney and where Professor Grunstein heads the Sleep and Circadian Research Group.

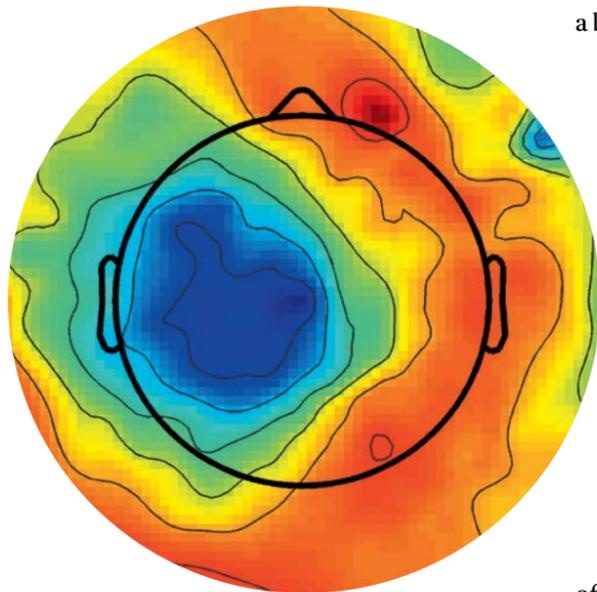
"A population that sleeps well is more productive, uses fewer health resources and has fewer workplace and road accidents," says Professor Grunstein, standing in the patient accommodation area. "These are things that can save lives and save the nation billions of dollars."

During the day, the 12-bed sleep accommodation feels strangely vacant, but at night it's buzzing with clinicians and the sleep disturbed: men, women and even children with conditions such as narcolepsy, circadian rhythm disturbances, and the second most common sleep disorder, sleep apnoea.

The Woolcock's sleep research unit is Australia's only multidisciplinary sleep centre



◀ Topographical brain maps showing the big differences in brain wave activity during wakefulness (above) and sleep (below).

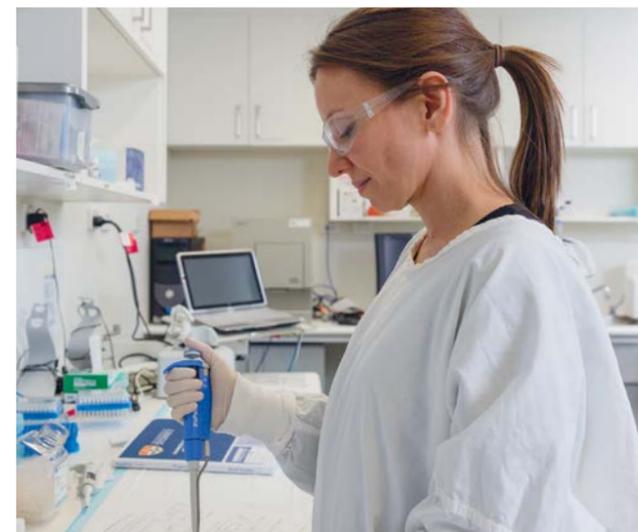


dedicated to understanding and treating sleep disorders, with researchers drawn from diagnosis and molecular biology through to drug development, disease management and sleep education. Walking into reception, it feels like a pleasant, mid-ranking city hotel, but the Woolcock offers a lot more than a bed for the night.

"We have an area where we can isolate some of our patients from time," Professor Grunstein says. "This lets us observe their actual sleep patterns by removing the cues that tell them what time of day it is."

This includes floors built on springs to absorb vibration from morning garbage trucks; food is continuously available so there's no sense of breakfast, lunch and dinner; light from any time of day can be mimicked in the rooms, and there's no internet or television. Male technicians even have to make sure they shave at random times.

The body clock, also called the circadian clock, is involved in more than sleep. It also affects behaviour,



▲ Dr Maria Comas Soberats says the body clock can be harnessed to make some cancer treatments more effective.



▲ Professor Ron Grunstein is a world authority on sleep and sleep disorders.

physiology and metabolism, such as eating patterns. "The richest results come when sleep disturbance and body clock studies inform each other," Professor Grunstein says. Which is why he jumped at the chance to bring Dr Maria Comas Soberats onto the team.

Recently arrived from Sweden, Dr Comas is a postdoctoral fellow and molecular chronobiologist who has worked with world authorities in the body-clock field. She is also an awarded researcher. "I am passionate about my work," she says. "There is so much to learn. For example, people with schizophrenia or other severe mental illnesses have chaotic body clocks. Understanding more about their clock function could lead to better treatments."

There is even the promise that cancer clinicians could use Dr Comas's insights to make existing treatments more effective.

"Every cell in a person's body has its own clock,"

she explains. "A red blood cell doesn't even have a nucleus, but it does have a clock. The clock activates and represses functions within that cell."

"So if a cancer drug is designed to be taken up by a particular receptor in a cell, it will be much more effective if you can administer it when you know the cell clock has made that receptor active."

This implies using a different mindset in some cancer treatments so the body clock is considered when designing therapies. What's always needed is more information, and Dr Comas is excited about what will be uncovered in this area.

"Professor Grunstein is helping me make connections here at the University with researchers in other fields. They really want to be involved," she says. "I've worked where people talk about collaboration but it doesn't happen. Here it does. It makes so much more possible."

The Wakil gift is the largest ever given to the University of Sydney in its 166-year history. It will mean a revolution in health education and research, writes Anna Herbert.

A new future for health education



Imagine a teaching environment that integrates all the health disciplines – nursing, medicine, allied health, dentistry and pharmacy – so the education on offer is underpinned by the latest multidisciplinary research.

The farsighted vision of Susan and Isaac Wakil is bringing this concept to life, with the aim of transforming healthcare education in Australia.

Through their family Foundation, the Wakils have committed an unprecedented \$35 million to establish a state-of-the-art facility that will be part of a unique health precinct at the University. This precinct will bring together the various health disciplines to form a multidisciplinary teaching and research hub.

“Organising Sydney health education and research in this way will enable many more opportunities for learning as teams, and for exploring ways to improve health by taking a broader perspective on health research,” the Dean of the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery (Sydney Nursing School), Professor Donna Waters (MPHlth ’97 PhD(Medicine) ’07), says.

“Our people are at the forefront of health research. We can add value by working together to embed this research in clinical service delivery and education.”

The Wakils’ new gift is in addition to another gift they made in support of nursing students. In 2015, the Wakils gave \$10.8 million to Sydney Nursing School to recognise the invaluable work of nurses in the frontline of healthcare. This gift established 12 annual scholarships in perpetuity, to assist undergraduate and

postgraduate nursing students with study, tuition and accommodation.

Together, these gifts provide a singular opportunity for the University to drive excellence in clinical services and holistic care wherever its health graduates go to work.

“We were inspired by the radical and innovative approach the University of Sydney is taking to address immediate and future healthcare challenges,” Mr Wakil says. “Susan and I are pleased to be able to make this project a reality.”



The philosophy behind co-location, where University students, researchers, clinical and education staff work closely together under the one roof exchanging knowledge and ideas, is mirrored in contemporary thinking about health.

“At the moment we don’t operate as an integrated health system – our services are fragmented,” explains the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Professor Kathryn Refshauge (DipManipPhysio ’84

MPHlthSc(Sports&ManipPhy) Hons ’75). “Our future services will be well-linked with access to multidisciplinary teams, the infrastructure will match the needs of the community and people will have control of their own health.”

The building is just the beginning. It will be the catalyst for new ways of thinking, collaborating and teaching. The changed mind-set will see health professionals moving away from their isolated silos to become part of a team working to improve

outcomes – a team that involves the patients and their families.

This model promises a future of more affordable and equitable healthcare and real patient choice. It’s a future worth imagining, and thanks to the shared vision of the Wakils and the health educators and researchers at the University of Sydney, it’s closer than you think.

▲ The new health hub will use ideas from University researchers and educators.

◀ A vision of the University health education hub that the Wakil Gift will help make possible.

How do we make financial decisions? Dr Agnieszka Tymula talks to Kat Friel about who is willing to tolerate more risk and why. The results may surprise you.

THE MONEY OR THE BOX

Neuroeconomics research, which combines ideas from neuroscience, economics, and psychology, has enquired into such weighty matters as whether monkeys are more risk averse when they're thirsty (yes) and if adolescents really are risk takers (no – but more on this later).

Dr Agnieszka Tymula is well versed in neuroeconomics. She's a Senior Lecturer at the University's School of Economics and describes herself as a decision scientist. She is interested in how people make financial decisions, particularly risky ones, and the role our brain plays in this process.

Dr Tymula recently started work with colleagues at the University's Brain and Mind Centre, trying to figure out how economics fits in with their research on age-related cognitive decline.

"I hope our research leads to practical policy and lifestyle interventions," Dr Tymula says. "So far a lot of effort has been made to improve memory for older people, which is of paramount importance. In this work we go one step further to look at improving decision making."

In general, Dr Tymula's research centres on the trade-offs people make when deciding between safe

but smaller rewards and larger rewards that come with more risk, and understanding who will tolerate more risk and in what circumstances.

Most people who participate in psychology research like this receive a standard fee, but it's different for Dr Tymula's volunteers. Just like in the real world, their decisions can affect what they're paid, which is important for seeing real-world outcomes.

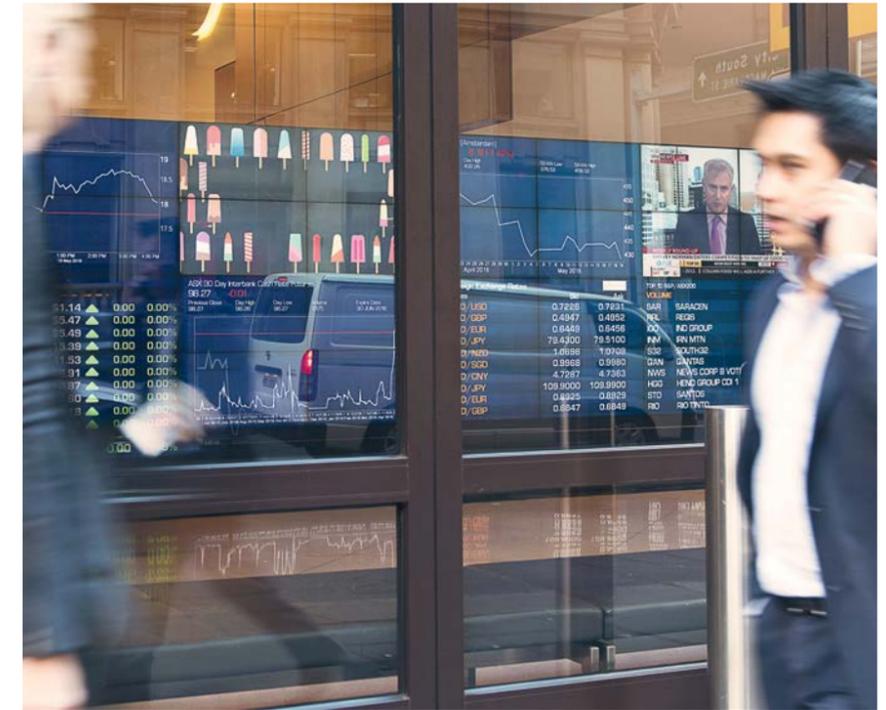
"Asking hypothetical questions doesn't convince economists," Dr Tymula explains. "For example, I may ask a study participant if she prefers \$5 for sure, or a lottery that pays either \$12 or nothing, with a 50-50 chance." As well as observing the decisions people make, Dr Tymula tracks brain activity using an MRI scanner.

"What was significant about older people in our study is that they made on average 40 per cent less money than young and mid-life adults," Dr Tymula says. "Part of the reason is that older people are simply more risk and ambiguity averse, so they will pay a premium for this."

At the opposite end of the age scale, Dr Tymula says it is a misconception that teenagers are prone to risk-taking behaviour.



▲ More than a coin toss. Dr Agnieszka Tymula is researching how people make decisions.



▲ The research looks at how people make financial decisions, particularly risky ones, and the role our brain plays in this process.

"We have compared the risk attitudes of 12-to-90 year olds and we found something interesting when we separated between known and unknown risk. We discovered that when the risks are known, adolescents are just as risk averse as older adults and actually much more risk averse than middle-aged adults," she says.

"It's in situations where they don't know the odds that adolescents take more risks. They behave as though the odds are skewed towards positive outcomes."

A better understanding of adolescent risk taking could help limit risky behaviour. Dr Tymula believes this is particularly important when considering mortality rate for adolescents, which is twice as high as that for younger children, despite adolescents typically being stronger and healthier.

Dr Tymula explains that we can start to improve our daily chances of making the right decisions by reducing the number of choices.

"The more options you have to consider when making a decision, the more you have to spread your neural resources around. As a consequence, the signals in your brain become noisy and you are more likely to make mistakes. For example, as you increase the

number of options, people are more likely to pick their second preference over their first," she says.

"You should start by eliminating the worst choices – what we call the distractors – first. This allows you to make the best decision."

Although age is a factor in decision making, it is not a simple correlation. "When people age, their brains change, losing grey matter at an individual, specific pace," Dr Tymula says. "We know now that grey-matter volume is more significant than chronological age as a predictor of an individual's risk attitude."

Dr Tymula also found that older people tended to make less money in her study because they were more likely to make mistakes and choose options that made them financially worse off.

"The brain is plastic – it can be shaped – so once we learn which regions of the brain are responsible for inferior financial decision making, we can start to think about what interventions can be made to slow this down. These could be simple recommendations to do more of certain activities that will help. If I can achieve this by the time I'm old, that would be awesome!"

Rabbi Dovid Slavin founded Our Big Kitchen in Bondi to help feed people in need. True success, he says, comes from helping others. He talks to Katie Booth (BA (Media&Comm) '16).

An open kitchen

In 2001, as Rabbi Dovid Slavin (PhD '13) and some volunteers were pouring the foundations for what would become Our Big Kitchen, world-shattering events were unfolding in the Rabbi's home city.

"For [9/11] to take place in my home town of New York ...," Rabbi Slavin says, falling silent as he reflects on the day. "The whole day for us was surreal. We started work very early in the morning and must have finished at about 10 or 11 at night. Then the news came through."

Rabbi Slavin migrated from the United States to Australia in 1992 to take up the position of Executive Director of the Rabbinical college of Sydney.

Quickly becoming active members of their Bondi community, Rabbi Slavin and his wife, Laya Slavin, founded Our Big Kitchen in 2005 after working with other volunteers to prepare meals for a sick member of their community. "The cooking



▲ Rabbi Dovid Slavin uses his huge personal energy to advance causes of social justice.

for and feeding of cancer patients became a big part of our home," Rabbi Slavin says.

Laya became immersed in helping cancer patients going through treatment, becoming a hairdresser and wig-maker in the process. Rabbi Slavin says if a client left wearing a wig and feeling more self-confident, Laya felt she'd hit the jackpot. "People going through treatment are vulnerable and sometimes aren't managing it," he says.

As making meals for vulnerable people became a bigger commitment for the Slavins, they decided to be clever about it. The light-bulb moment came after a long day of peeling, chopping and cooking.

"If you forgot the tin opener, the whole operation came to a standstill," Rabbi Slavin says. It was then that the Slavins grasped the logistics of setting up Our Big Kitchen: "And that's how the kitchen was born."



▲ Standing in Our Big Kitchen, Rabbi Slavin credits the incredible dedication of his wife Laya (above right) for making the kitchen a reality.

Our Big Kitchen now has 650 volunteers making more than 70,000 meals a year for those in need. The facility offers activities including volunteers cooking for the homeless as well as school and corporate giving days. "What we've done here is used food as a platform to allow people to connect and help them feel empowered," Rabbi Slavin says.

Whether it's companies preparing meals for the homeless or providing space for caterers to start their own businesses, food is the language of Our Big Kitchen and kindness is the currency. The same can be said for the Slavins' home, where the couple are raising their eight children, which Rabbi Slavin describes as his "proudest achievement".

With his fierce belief in social justice, it should come as no surprise that Rabbi Slavin read upwards of 300 books during the course of his University of Sydney PhD research into the Holocaust. Rather than focusing on the destruction of European Jews, he investigated what was lost to Jewish life and culture. He particularly examined the Polish Rabbinical college where his grandfather, Dovid Minzberg, after whom Rabbi Slavin was named, was a member.

Professor Suzanne Rutland from the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies supervised Rabbi Slavin's research. Talking about his time at the University of Sydney, he says Professor Rutland was

"much more than a supervisor, she was a mentor and a friend".

In 2002, Rabbi Slavin made the trip to Poland with his mother, who had left the country as a young girl. "It was a very special thing to go back to a world that has just vanished, that has been destroyed, where the whole context and terms of reference have gone," he reflects.

One of the most striking moments in the course of the research took place in New York as he interviewed one of his grandfather's students.

"I'm sitting there talking to him and he stops and says, 'how old are you?'," he recalls. "I was 44 or 45 at the time and I told him. The next thing, he says 'no you're not – I am not who you think I am either. I'll tell you what's happening here: I'm not in my 80s, I'm a 17-year-old boy, and we're not sitting here in New York, we're sitting back in the Yeshiva [a Jewish institution for the study of traditional religious texts]. You're not Dovid Slavin, you're Dovid Minzberg'. I get chills today when I think about it."

With his dedication to helping those in need radiating through his warm smile, Rabbi Slavin's work rests on strong foundations: from the concrete base of Our Big Kitchen to the historical and cultural roots of his research.

At a collaborative workshop, students design new technologies to assist people with disabilities. The results are good for everyone, writes Angela Wilcox-Watson.

DESIGN OF THE TIMES



Despite our best efforts, the design process can unwittingly limit technology's potential. It's often hard to predict the experiences and needs of the people who will use it, particularly when those people might be living with disabilities.

In April 2016, students from the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning aimed to overcome this by taking part in the Enabled by Design-athon.

Enabled by Design-athon is an international initiative that brings together students, industry, clinical practitioners and people living with disabilities to workshop ideas for new products and assistive technologies. The Australian Enabled by Design-athon is hosted, in partnership with the University of Sydney, by the Remarkable organisation, which is a division of Cerebral Palsy Alliance.

In the classroom, students learn about the value of co-design, where designers and the ultimate users all contribute ideas. The Design-athon was an opportunity to put this principle into practice for students who will one day be designing products for

all kinds of users, including people with disabilities and an ageing population.

Associate Professor Martin Tomitsch, Head of Design in the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning, says collaboration allows designers and users to bring their own perspectives and experiences to generate change. "It can lead not only to new solutions that otherwise might not have emerged, but more importantly it will bring out solutions that actually address the concerns, needs and desires of people," he says.

"An important side benefit of co-design is that people feel empowered by having a say in what future products might look like."

After three days of intensive work, teams presented prototypes of their designs to their peers and a panel of judges. The ideas were diverse – from a Bluetooth device to help visually impaired people find their destinations, to a shopping trolley for people who struggle with mobility.

Third-year Bachelor of Design Computing student

Kate Archbold says the event opened up her mind to being more inclusive. "One of the things I really took away from this is that there's a big difference between designing *for* someone with a disability and designing *with* someone with a disability.

"We have such an increasing demand for designs that are inclusive on all levels. It needs to be something that we think about day to day, rather than trying to do it at the end of the design process because you forgot to do it at the start."

The designs generated at Enabled by Design-athon have the potential to be taken up by investors and developed into groundbreaking new products. "If it even sparks an idea that could make it happen in the future, I'd be happy with that," Archbold says.

This assistive technology could help the nearly 2000 students who are registered with the University's Disability Services unit.

"Advances in technology are constantly improving assistive technology to make it more effective for the user," Disability Services Manager Dagmar Kminiak says. "New technologies could assist individuals

with a range of disabilities to offset the impacts of their condition on their study – the opportunities are exciting and endless."

Support for students with a disability includes access to the Assistive Technology Lab in Fisher Library; screen readers and magnifiers for vision impairment; voice recognition for learning, physical and cognitive impairments; and text-to-speech technology for learning and cognitive disabilities.

The University also supplies large print, braille and accessible PDFs for exams, as well as more specific tools and support for individual students' needs.

The founder of Remarkable and workshop organiser, Peter Horsley, says co-design can often lead to ideas and technologies that benefit all members of society. "We want to see assistive technology kick into the higher level of universal design," Horsley says. "We really believe that disability can be a lens you look through that enables innovation, and to think about design in a better way for everyone."

▼ The University works to recognise the needs, contributions and accomplishments of its people living with disabilities.



Learning more about how lymphoma affects dogs could lead advances in treatment for humans who have the condition, writes Katynna Parry (BSc(Adv)(Hons) '01).

Making a dog's life longer

Mac and Jetty were two beautiful border collies and hugely important family members to Anne and Warwick Evans as they ran their vineyard and cellar.

"Mac and Jetty won hearts wherever they went," Anne says. "They were excellent judges of character and quite discerning."

When the two dogs were diagnosed with lymphoma and later passed away, Anne wanted to turn her sorrow into something more practical. As it happened, the two vets who treated the dogs at the Bega and Cobargo clinics were Sydney alumni and they suggested contacting the University. That contact led to Anne and Warwick making a gift to the University.

The result of this gift is the Mac and Jetty Lymphoma Research Project. Led by Associate Professor Peter Williamson (PhD (Vet Science) '93), in the Faculty of Veterinary Science, the project aims to unravel the genetic basis for one of the most common cancers in dogs.

"Some breeds of dog exhibit an extremely high rate of the disease," says Associate Professor Williamson. "Our group has found a possible genetic area that predisposes another dog breed – bullmastiffs – to lymphoma, so we're keen to investigate whether this is the case in border collies."

The research may also have impacts on lymphoma in humans which has many similarities to canine lymphoma, with humans and canines responding to treatments in a similar way. Since human lymphoma is the most common form of haematological or blood cancer in Australia, and the sixth most common form of cancer overall, the potential benefits of this research are far-reaching.

The Mac and Jetty Lymphoma Research project started in earnest in 2016,

with Associate Professor Williamson recruiting PhD student Pamela Soh (BAnVetBSc(Hons I) '15) and master's student Katrina Cheng (BVSc(Hons) '11) to work on the project.

"Our initial results suggest that in cases where dogs develop lymphoma early in life ... there may be a genetic predisposition."



▲ Associate Professor Peter Williamson, left, and PhD student Pamela Soh use the latest genome technologies to investigate lymphoma.

▶ Border collies Mac and Jetty will be remembered through the gift that created the Mac and Jetty Lymphoma Research Project.



Soh's honours research looked at the function and structure of bacterial proteins found in poultry, called bacterial proteomics, which brought together molecular bioscience and veterinary science.

"The project will help us understand the heritability of lymphoma and facilitate the development of new breeding strategies to control its incidence in these dogs," says Soh. "I'll be examining proteomic and metabolomic aspects of lymphoma in border collies to help us understand how the biochemical pathways are affected. This could lead to earlier diagnosis and, eventually, better treatments."

Soh's co-researcher, Cheng, has worked as a veterinarian in small animal general practices and referral hospitals, but her strong interest in veterinary oncology brought her back to the University for further studies. Her study program includes a research component, so she decided to join the Mac and Jetty Lymphoma Research Project.

"There is potentially a large amount of information and data regarding lymphoma in dogs available from veterinary clinics, kennel clubs and pet owners," explains Cheng. "My role in the project is to collect the information and evaluate it in a scientific manner."

"I have always been very interested in research that contributes to improvement of the quality of life for animals," she says.

As border collies are a very popular breed, the team has been able to access many samples from both healthy and diseased border collies.

"Our initial results suggest that in cases where dogs develop lymphoma early in life – about four years of age – there may be a genetic predisposition," Associate Professor Williamson says.

Anne and Warwick still miss Mac and Jetty and they're glad to be contributing to a greater understanding of lymphoma. "We're hoping that if the research achieves a successful outcome, other dogs may be spared the suffering that Mac and Jetty endured," Anne says.

"Dogs give us so much unqualified love and devotion without expecting anything in return. I could never repay Mac and Jetty for the joy they brought into our lives."

If you breed or own border collies, we invite you to participate in the Mac and Jetty Lymphoma Research project by contacting us via the project website: www.facebook.com/USydBorderCollie or fill in the survey at: www.surveymonkey.com/r/USydBorderCollie

To learn more about supporting work like this, please call our bequest team on 02 8627 8492.

Winston Churchill said: “We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us.” Justine Bashford explores the old and the brand new on the University of Sydney’s constantly evolving campus.

Grounds for change

A great building is functional and inspirational at the same time. For most graduates of the University of Sydney, the iconic Great Hall is such a building. Completed in 1854, it was the work of English architect, Edmund Blacket, in the style of the Gothic buildings of his homeland.

Many building have been added to the campus since then, but in the late 2000s, it was painfully apparent that there had been little University investment in infrastructure for more than 20 years. “We were behind the eight-ball,” says Campus Planning Manager Juliette Churchill, who has a background in heritage and education architecture. “Other universities around the country had been ensuring their infrastructure kept pace with advances in research and teaching and learning. Many of our buildings were reaching the end of their lifecycles – we had a lot of catching up to do.”

Now, for the first time in the University’s history, a

comprehensive plan has been laid out for cohesive development of the campus: our new seven-year Campus Improvement Plan received government approval in February this year.

Before looking forward, let’s rewind a little. In 2009, the New Law Building, with its environmental design principles, was opened; in 2014 we launched the innovative Charles Perkins Centre research and education hub for research into obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and related conditions. In 2015 we opened the Queen Mary Building, transforming the former nurses’ quarters at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital into affordable accommodation for 800 students;



and just this year we opened the Abercrombie Business School and the high-tech Sydney Nanoscience Hub.

Let’s reach back just a little further. At the outset of World War Two, the University had just 3500 students. By 1948, student numbers had swelled to 10,779. In response to the desperate shortage of teaching space, the “temporary” Transient Building was erected. Nearly 70 years after its construction, the Transient Building was finally demolished just this year – not for buildings, but to create a permanent green space suitable for outdoor teaching or social events.

Now let’s step right back in time. The Quadrangle sits on the peak of a hill that has been a place of learning for the Cadigal people of the Eora nation for tens of thousands of years.

Acknowledging this, the campus plan is using Wingara Mura Design Principles, which encapsulate both the vision of our founders and the aspirations of our community.

▶ The Nanoscience Hub, with its world-leading, hi-tech laboratories, is part of a new generation of campus buildings.

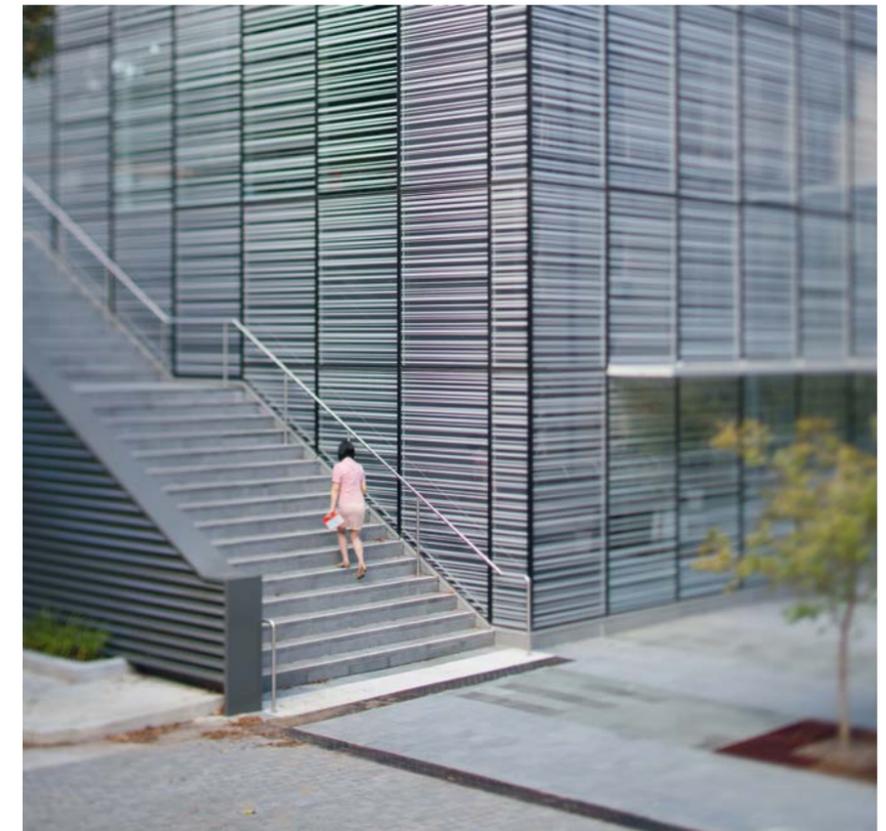
◀ The Transient Building has lived up to its name – in its place there is now green space.

“These design principles ensure that open spaces and buildings are woven together in a culturally responsive way,” Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Strategy and Services) Professor Shane Houston says. “We want to use our open spaces not simply for relaxation, but as an integral part of our learning space and our celebrations.”

In transforming the campus for the 21st century and beyond, Campus Infrastructure Services is working closely with local and international architecture firms renowned for people-focused urban planning and for revitalising public spaces. The campus plan has been refined through the University’s collaboration with these firms, again adapting to changing needs.

Preservation is vital to the campus plan. “It’s incredibly important to retain and conserve our heritage buildings,” Churchill says. “Those buildings are what set us apart, and we love them.”

The University has been working with the Heritage Council of NSW to include the entire Camperdown Campus on the state’s Heritage List. Funding has been set aside to ensure the retention, restoration and conservation of our heritage-significant buildings, and already work has taken place



on the Madsen, Heydon Lawrence, Edgeworth David, J D Stewart, Badham and Physics buildings. Restoration projects, including facade rectification, are planned for several more.

While buildings are earmarked for demolition, this will only take place where a building has reached the end of its useful existence. The Blackburn and Bosch buildings, for example, will make way for the Susan Wakil Building, which will bring health sciences and education together under one roof.

By contrast, the Macleay Building, internally reconfigured through the years to include laboratories, will be returned to its original use as a museum through a generous donation from Dr Chau Chak Wing. This means the University’s extensive historical and art collections will be

accommodated in the one place.

More affordable student accommodation is planned by repurposing local terrace houses, encouraging students to live on campus and enabling a community to grow within the University’s boundaries.

Today, a short walk across the Camperdown Campus takes you from Victorian Gothic revival architecture via tree-lined avenues, passing 1920s art deco, 60s functionalism, 80s brutalism, and through to our latest state-of-the-art buildings, the Abercrombie Building; the Charles Perkins Centre and the Sydney Nanoscience Hub, capped off with a telescope that looks like pure science fiction. It is a marvellous patchwork reflecting the University’s past and future.

Fortuna Audaces Iuvat: Fortune favours the bold.
And the bold study Latin, Ancient Greek and the Classics.
Monica Crouch (BA(Hons) '95) finds out why.

Classics never date

The world's most widely spoken languages, in rough order, are Mandarin, Spanish, English, Arabic, Hindi and Russian. Latin and Ancient Greek don't make this list – they're not even among the top 100.

But dead? Hardly. The New Testament was written in Ancient Greek. *I, Claudius*, a mini-series about the Roman Empire, was big on the small screens in 1976. Remember *The Secret History*, Donna Tartt's bestselling novel from 1992? Her central characters were a group of classics students. *Harry Potter* author J K Rowling studied Latin and based Dumbledore on one of her professors. Then there's *Gladiator* (2000); *Troy* (2004); and *300* (2006): all big blockbusters reflecting a lasting interest in the ancient world.

Even Westpac Bank has been known to seek out graduates with ancient languages on their CVs because

of their problem-solving ability. Former Westpac chief executive Gail Kelly taught Latin in South Africa before embarking on her renowned banking career.



▲ Long live ancient languages: from left, Senior Lecturer in Latin Dr Paul Roche; PhD Candidate Irene Stone; Lecturer in Classics and Ancient History Dr Robert Cowan.

The University of Sydney isn't immune. Every year, the Department of Classics and Ancient History welcomes up to 100 students into its Latin and Ancient Greek programs, and more than 500 into its Ancient History units. The University's January Latin Summer School attracts more than 200 students aged 14 to 90 from across Australia. There are sold-out stagings of Greek tragedies and extracurricular Latin reading groups for

students who wish to keep up their skills.

"People love Latin," Senior Lecturer in Classics Dr Bob Cowan says. "They have a massive appetite to learn it."



◀ Latin funerary monument for a man named Tiberius Claudius Amianthus. From Rome, Italy, 1st century AD. NMR.1118, Nicholson Museum.

Senior Lecturer in Latin Dr Paul Roche agrees. "Latin is a blueprint for understanding other languages," he says. "It's behind French, Italian, Spanish and the other Romance languages." PhD candidate Irene Stone (BA(Hons) '12 DipLangStudies '14), whose work focuses on speeches and speech making in Herodotus's *Histories*, adds: "The ancient languages assist in the ability to write good English."

The notion persists, however, that studying these languages is difficult. Dr Roche sees it differently. "Latin has a very clear grammar," he says. "There are a lot of grammatical rules in Latin, and that initially takes a bit of getting used to. But once you've got them under your belt, the more rules a language has, the less ambiguity it has."

Dr Roche has taught students who use Latin as a research tool for ancient history; those who are curious about the literature of the period; and English majors interested in the deep roots English has in Latin. "We have scientists and of course law students – a lot of the law's technical terminology is in Latin," he says.

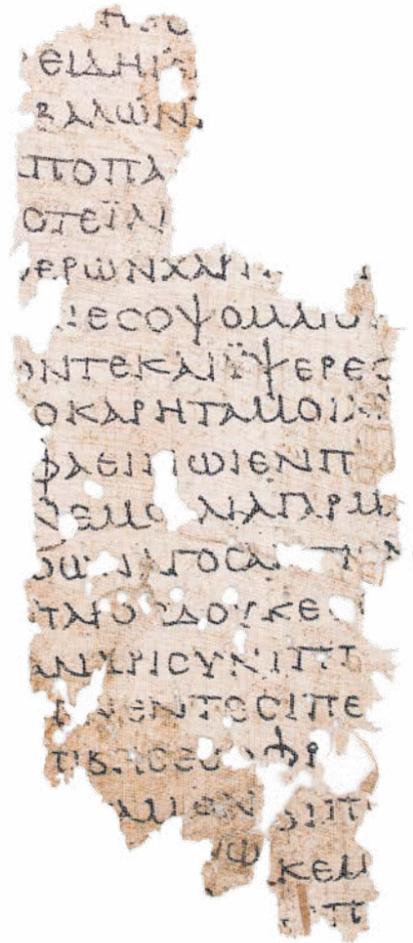
Ancient languages are also a key that unlocks the classics. "This is the study of the great civilisations of Ancient Greece and Rome – their history, literature, archaeology," Dr Cowan explains. "They are endlessly fascinating periods in themselves, but also have had an immense influence on Western – and world – civilisation ever since."

Dr Cowan believes the classics are a great way to delve into the hearts of cultures that were simultaneously like our own and yet strangely alien. "One moment we feel as though we're having a goblet of wine with Horace, discussing life and love," he says. "The next we're watching a Roman general cancel a battle because the sacred chickens aren't eating their corn properly."

For Dr Roche, the joy of Latin is in its literature. "It was produced by a group of people who had such a depth of feeling for the human experience," he says, citing the poets Virgil and Horace as particular favourites. "They answered ethical questions that are still relevant today – they're in the same category as Homer, Dante or Milton."

Dr Roche is careful to point out that while we have this wonderful treasure trove of literature, it comes largely from a privileged male point of view, so we need to exercise caution when using these texts to recover the experience of women and minority groups such as slaves and foreigners. Even so, he adds, some female voices survive directly to us in the poetry of Sulpicia in Latin and Sappho in Ancient Greek.

Studying the classics embodies the University of Sydney principles of nurturing deep and specialised knowledge while exploring new thinking. "Classics is the original interdisciplinary subject," Dr Cowan says. "History, literature, philosophy, democracy, art,



archaeology, politics, language, linguistics, theatre studies, gender studies – all are an integral part of classics.”

In person, all three of these scholars exude what Stone calls the “pure magic” of engaging with ancient texts in their original form. But in the more earthly realm of careers, where does a graduate with a classics degree go? “This sort of study – ancient history combined with an ancient language – ensures a student not only covers the exacting task of learning an ancient language, but also becomes adept at pinpointing and solving problems,” Stone says.

Graduates go into law, commerce, public service, as well as academia and teaching, Dr Cowan says.

Stone adds: “Any number of modern careers will benefit from a knowledge of ancient history, Latin or Greek – law, maths, architecture, medicine, international diplomacy.”

Fancy revisiting your classical studies or taking up a whole new interest? *Carpe diem.*

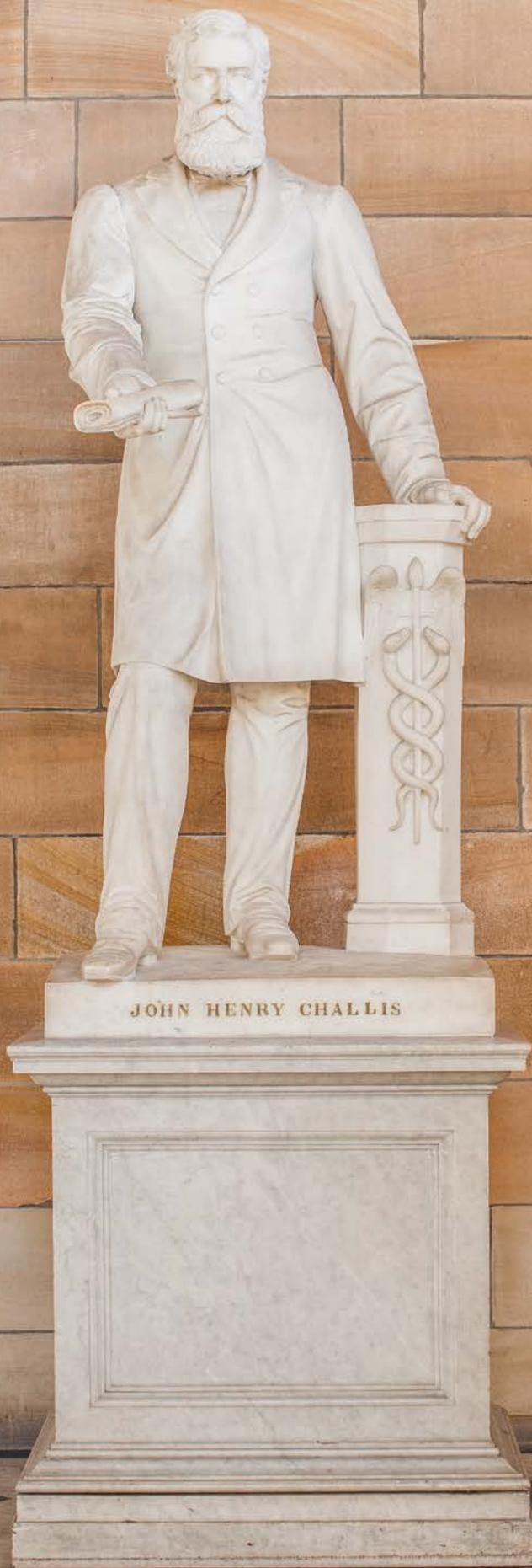
◀ Red figure neck amphora depicting Iphigenia and Pylades, a scene from the ancient Greek play *Iphigenia of Tauris* by Euripides. From Campania, Italy, 350–325BC. NM51.17, Nicholson Museum.

▲ Fragment of *The Iliad*, an epic poem in Ancient Greek by Homer, written on papyrus. From Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, 2nd century AD. NM39.5, Nicholson Museum.

COURSES: BRUSH UP OR BEGIN

The Centre for Continuing Education at the University of Sydney offers a 10 percent discount for alumni attending its wide range of classics courses. Choose from ancient history, classical language classes, reading Latin for pleasure, courses on the Minoans and the Mycenaeans and an introduction to philosophy. For more information, please visit:
cce.sydney.edu.au/alumni
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