Vice Chancellor’s comment 1
Northern attraction 2
Higher education reality at Alice Springs 4
Broadband boost welcomed 5
Eight wheels of education 6
Lifting literacy levels 7
Free symposium - Creative Tropical City 8
Top Student Honoured 9
Helping Indigenous men to health 10
Kath and Kim and childhood services 12
Tertiary access for success 14
New approach: Indigenous research and education 17
Tracking time with tropical turtles 18
Tropical Savannahs $3 million boost 20
Darwin’s next big thing 22
Producing perfect prawns 23
Music program a class act 24
Bamboozled 26
Sweetest sounds 28
Sustainable Indigenous art 31
New publications 32
Spam and the digital divide 34
Navigating at the next level 35

Directions 36
  Award adds up to breakthrough 36
  Physics student gets to Bragg 36
  Studying to design a better Darwin 37
  Support in trying times 38

Legacy of local legend 39
Welcome to the first edition of Origins which profiles Australia’s newest university.

Established in November 2003, Charles Darwin University is a place for fresh thought, bold vision and renewed focus. The first step has been to develop a new framework for the institution and we have been heartened by the support and input from our stakeholders in making sure we build the right framework to deliver outcomes for the Territory.

The energy and enthusiasm that Charles Darwin University is harnessing in finding knowledge solutions is inspirational – and we have only just opened for business.

With campuses and study centres located across the Northern Territory, we offer opportunities beyond what is normally expected of a University. We provide pathways into a broad range of courses in traditional areas as well as specialist areas unique to our location including tropical and desert studies and Indigenous research and education.

For a place steeped in Aboriginal tradition and culture which enjoys a close interaction with the peoples of Southeast Asia, our location affords boundless research opportunities to create local knowledge with global applications.

We are a University that dares to be different. We welcome researchers, teachers and students who are prepared to take on challenges and are committed to making a difference.

This first edition of Origins provides a snapshot of the diversity and strengths on which we are building the new institution.
Some of Australia’s leading academics have joined Charles Darwin University, strengthening the organisation’s role as a leading research and education provider in specialist areas.

Professor Robert Wasson is the new Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research with responsibility for leading the University’s Institute of Advanced Studies. Professor Wasson has an outstanding national and international research record and a history of collaborative research across sectors. Professor Wasson moves from his previous role as the Director of the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies in the Institute of Advanced Studies at the Australian National University, and was previously the Dean of Science at the ANU.

Within the Institute of Advanced Studies, Professor Bruce Campbell takes up the position of Director of the Research School of Environmental Studies. Professor Campbell is moving from his previous role as the Director of the Forests and Livelihoods Program at the Centre for International Forestry Research based in Jakarta, Indonesia and was previously the Director of the Institute of Environmental Studies and Chair of Botany at the University of Zimbabwe.

Professor Stephen Garnett has accepted the Chair in Tropical Knowledge, a position jointly funded by the Northern Territory Government and the University to lead and promote research across disciplines in tropical knowledge particularly as it relates to development in the Territory. Dr Garnett leaves his previous role as a senior Queensland government employee and Adjunct Associate Professor in the School of Tropical Biology at James Cook University.

Professor Donna Craig has been appointed to the inaugural Chair of Desert Knowledge located at the Alice Springs Campus. As part of the University’s Institute of Advanced Studies, the Chair will foster postgraduate research capacity and undertake leading-edge research focused on the scientific and social development needs of inland desert Australia. In collaboration with other desert knowledge contributors, Professor Craig will build a strong research capacity and opportunities for local and international scholars and students to participate in developing desert knowledge of international standing. Professor Craig will also be working closely with the newly established Co-operative Research Centre for Desert Knowledge and other community groups. A barrister with twenty-four years experience teaching environmental law, Professor Craig’s academic experience is drawn from North American and Australian institutions. She has been a Visiting Professor at the University of Arizona’s School of Law and has also undertaken numerous national and international environmental and Indigenous advisory roles.

Professor Lesley Barclay joins Charles Darwin University as the Chair of Health Services Development in the Institute of Advanced Studies. Previously, Professor Barclay was the Director of the Centre for Family Health and Midwifery at the University of Technology, Sydney. Professor Barclay is acknowledged as a leader in education systems and health system improvement, specialising in developing skills in people working in health areas in non-metropolitan settings. Professor Barclay has designed, tendered and managed successfully large projects for international organisations such as the World Bank and AusAID and has undertaken a range of consultancy work. She was awarded an AO in this year’s Australia Day Honours list in recognition of these contributions.

Professor Ian Thynne has been appointed as the new Chair of Governance at Charles Darwin University. Located within the University’s Faculty of Law, Business and Arts, the Chair is jointly funded with the Northern Territory’s Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment. The position will take the leadership role in the development of courses in governance and public sector management at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels as well as research and consultancy services designed for government and non-government sectors, including Indigenous organisations. Professor Thynne is currently Visiting Professor of Public Administration at the University of Hong Kong, a Fellow in the University of Hong Kong’s Centre for Civil Society and Governance and adjunct scholar in the Centre for Research in Public Sector Management at the University of Canberra. Professor Thynne’s academic experience is drawn from institutions across the Asia Pacific region including New Zealand, Australian, Singapore and Papua New Guinea.

Some of Australia’s leading academics have joined Charles Darwin University, strengthening the organisation’s role as a leading research and education provider in specialist areas.
Higher education at Alice

The Centre will be a modern eco-friendly base for a range of higher educational choices for central Australians. It will also provide scope for future expansion as the University confirms itself as a respected education institution offering a range of degree programs with desert knowledge as a specialist area.

The $4.5 million development has been enabled by a $2 million federal government grant and will be progressed immediately thanks for $2.5 million in funding from the Northern Territory government.

“The Higher Education Centre will mean new opportunities for central Australians,” Vice Chancellor Professor Helen Garnett said.

“It demonstrates a commitment to build local capacity in higher education and research, particularly in desert knowledge, to underpin the region’s social and economic development.”

NT Minister for Education, Mr Syd Stirling, said that one of the main aims with the creation of Charles Darwin was to ensure that it was a University for all Territorians, no matter where they lived and that the investment in Central Australia will help to achieve that vision.

“Importantly, it means more Central Australian students will be able to pursue their studies locally, rather than having to move to Darwin or interstate and staying there,” Mr Stirling stated.

To be built on the University’s existing Alice Springs Campus, the Centre’s design will feature current technologies in energy efficiency that emphasise passive cooling and solar heating where applicable.

Educational features will include:
- laboratories
- a 50 seat lecture theatre – possibly extended to seat up to 150 people in future
- postgraduate student facilities
- a help and enquiry point for Higher Education and VET students; and
- a computing facility to access the Casuarina campus library’s resources.

Importantly, a wider range of lecturers and course programs will be offered through an integrated e-learning component that will allow students to simultaneously participate in classes delivered from Casuarina (Darwin) campus.

As well as enhancing the delivery of programs to ‘on campus’ students, the Higher Education Centre will also provide a resource base from which educators can deliver their programs to regional communities.

“With more than 3,000 students enrolled at the existing Alice Springs Campus, the new facility will help the University build local capacity in higher education and research to underpin the Central region’s social and economic development,” said Professor Garnett.

A landmark Higher Education Centre will be built in Alice Springs as part of a Charles Darwin University push to advance central Australian education.

Charles Darwin University and the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education stand to benefit from improved capacity for electronic-based education and research activities in central Australia.

The federal government will allocate $1.75 million install a 10km broadband fibre optic backbone running from Charles Darwin University’s Alice Springs Campus to include a series of institutions south of the city.

The fibre, to be installed by Amcom Telecommunications, will run south from the University past the hospital and through Heavitree Gap. The institutions south of Alice Springs set to benefit from the cabling include the Centre for Remote Sensing, the Australian Centre for Remote Sensing and other organisations in the Desert Knowledge Precinct.

Lead by the University, the project’s partners also include the Northern Territory Government, Desert Knowledge Australia and Amcom Telecommunications. The project will leverage off other developments such as the Australia Research and Education Network (AREN) initiatives. Charles Darwin University and Batchelor Institute provide essentially all Higher Education and about 95 per cent of VET services in the NT.
Remote secondary students in the Northern Territory will benefit from the announcement of a third Mobile Adult Learning Unit (MALU) to be built for Charles Darwin University.

Construction on the $320 000 MALU three will be completed early in second semester. Built in the Northern Territory for local environment and conditions, MALU three will be equal to the largest double axle trailer manufactured in Australia.

Project Coordinator, David Reilly, said “when it comes to mobile training facilities, bigger is definitely better.”

Charles Darwin University currently operates two MALU units, each travelling to four remote locations per year for 10-week blocks.

“We take education and training to the community,” said Mr Reilly. “The MALU units are independent learning spaces. Delivery can be done anywhere that is required in the Territory. They are very popular with the communities, who often make requests for their return. At this time, this may take up to three years.”

Communities welcomed the announcement as they prefer training to take place on site. This ensures that the community has control of their trainees and the program.

Principal of Mt Allan School, Stephen Smith, welcomed the announcement saying that “the young people of this area appreciated the opportunity to learn and develop their skills in the trade fields of welding, steel fabrication and automotive, provided by MALU one.

Principal Deb Williams from Laramba School said “the availability of a third MALU unit will help meet local demand from local secondary aged students for trades and computer studies.”

Mr Reilly said “MALU is more economically viable and provides more practical solutions. Communities do not have to spend money on building or maintaining classrooms that may not be used continuously due to lack of staff and programs.”

MALU’s primary focus will be on Secondary delivery, providing students with two pathways not available to them previously.

Annette Jamieson, Director Secondary Charles Darwin University, said, “MALU now gives these students the opportunity to complete their VET certificate and then use this to complete their Northern Territory Certificate of Education or they can go on to a Traineeship or Apprenticeship.

“Charles Darwin staff have been working closely with remote school teachers. Teachers work with students before MALU arrives and can therefore deliver far more hours in the limited time MALU is available. The teachers then continue with their program once MALU leaves.

“Whole communities are coming on board. For example, with Retail delivery, it’s not just theory; students are provided access to the community store.” Ms Jamieson explained.

MALU three will also be used for Trades delivery and for other multi-purpose applications.

To be built by Alice Springs company Gowreal Pty Ltd - Mick Murray Welding, MALU three will be 13.7 metres in length, 2.5 metres wide and have an internal height of 2.9 metres.

It will have a stage platform that lowers as a floor using hydraulics to create enclosed spaces for multi purpose use. The greenhouse section will have refrigerated air conditioning with an IDL Unit provided by OPTUS Communications recessed into the roof, with the underneath section having ample room for six laptop workstations.

The IDL unit will allow access to after hours teaching from the School of the Air Studio in Alice Springs. The first program to be offered using the IDL unit will be in Community Services: Children’s Services program.

The rest of the trailer, fitted with evaporative airconditioning, opens out into an extra large classroom with teaching space for the second lecturer.

Mr Reilly said as an example, “By rearranging the swivel doors, the classroom can be reconfigured to create an auditorium incorporating sound and lighting equipment when teaching contemporary music. The unit will also have vending curtains built into the unit.”

Charles Darwin University, in partnership with the Northern Territory and Commonwealth governments, is developing an intensive implementation and research plan to expand an innovative literacy program in the Territory.

The National Accelerated Literacy Program is designed to accelerate the literacy skills of marginalised learners who have failed to make the appropriate literacy gains in school and/or who are in acute danger of falling behind.

“The partnership constitutes the first phase to make Accelerated Literacy available and sustainable Australia wide,” said Dr Tess Lea, Director of the School for Social and Policy Research at Charles Darwin University.

For the past five years, accelerated literacy has been conducted as an action research project by a small team of experts based at the University of Canberra under the Scaffolding Literacy Program. These specialists headed up by Associate Professor Brian Gray and Ms Wendy Coye, have now transferred to Charles Darwin University.

“Under the pilots, students successfully gained literacy skills at a much higher level than if the intervention had not occurred.” Professor Gray explained.

Following this success, the Northern Territory Government, working in concert with the Charles Darwin University, is the first Australian State or Territory to open up its schools to the research and development work required to mainstream the Program.

In 2002 testing, 20 per cent of remote Indigenous students achieved the numeracy benchmark at the Year 5 level, compared to 61 per cent urban Indigenous students and 91 per cent non-Indigenous students. Where the national average percentage of students reaching reading benchmark was 90 per cent, 26 per cent of Indigenous students reached this standard in the Territory.

“Despite this national tragedy, there is little information available on what might constitute the best buys for education investment if there are to be significant turn arounds on these appalling outcomes” Dr Lea stated.

“By focusing on northern Australia almost exclusively in 2004-6, it is anticipated that the models, techniques and materials – the management blueprint - for extension to other Australian education systems on a whole-of-state basis will be tested and established by this University, working in a unique partnership with both tiers of government and the philanthropic sectors,” Dr Lea said.

Dr Lea has already secured a three year $435,000 grant from the Ian Potter Foundation. The grant will support a Senior/Principal Research Fellow in Education Economics who will formulate and drive many of the research questions behind this new program.

“Education Economics is a ground-breaking response to the limited evidence base currently available to understand what teachers and schools should or could be doing to... of objective advice on where key investment areas for best education effect could or should be made,” explained Dr Lea.

The National Accelerated Literacy Program is the first on many exciting research projects to come from Charles Darwin University’s recently established School for Social and Policy Research which is focused on building research capacity in the areas of health, social science and public policy, environmental and industry studies.
FREE SYMPOSIUM
Creative tropical city

Initiated last year, the Charles Darwin Symposia Series is designed to mark the University as a space where diverse ideas about contemporary life and issues in northern Australia can be debated by a broad cross-section of the community.

As a free ‘festival of ideas’ the Series attracts high quality speakers blending local and national, academic and professional, and lay perspectives on issues of importance to northern Australia and our future.

The Symposia is founded on the idea that conference forums should be a stimulating and enriching context enabling people to begin conversations and discussions they will take away with them to other contexts, sparking actions and thoughts that extend the influence of ideas in unexpected directions.

For 2004, Creative Tropical City is being held 2-3 June at the Casuarina Campus. A second symposium will be held in Alice Springs in the second half of 2004.

Creative Tropical City focuses discussion on how the Northern Territory Capital can thrive through the risk of embracing and growing its own creativity and identity.

“...it is widely agreed that Darwin needs a vision – it needs to define its brand not just to improve its position in the competitive world of tourism, but to give the City a clear set of goals it can work towards,” said Symposium convenor Professor Ian Buchanan.

“The Creative Tropical City Symposium contributed to this important debate with research that challenges our assumptions about what makes a city successful and how one should go about revitalizing a city.

“The Symposium will be an open forum for ideas to be exchanged and debated and all people with an interest in the future of Darwin should attend.

“The speakers are drawn from a wide cross-section of expertise, but have in common a desire to see cities become better places to live,” said Professor Buchanan, who is also Lecturer in Communication and Cultural Studies at the University.

A detailed program of Creative Tropical City, including the full list of speakers and their presentations in both written and audio format are located at www.cdu.edu.au/cdss

Mother of four children who are all under the age of ten, Sharon McGregor, 28, was recently awarded the University Medal for achieving the highest grade point average in an undergraduate degree.

Mrs McGregor completed her Bachelor of Arts last year. "I am thrilled to have been awarded the University Medal," Mrs McGregor said.

“My Charles Darwin University degree has opened many doors for me.”

Darwin born and bred, Mrs McGregor moved to Canberra in January this year to take up year-long graduate program with Defence. Currently she is on secondment to the Department of the House of Representatives as a research officer.

Mrs McGregor said that her graduation is a testament that you can achieve anything that you put your mind to. It is both an end and a beginning.

“I owe the opportunity to return to university as a mature aged student to my parents-in-law, Alasdair and Helen. When I commenced studying I had three children and had a fourth at the beginning of the second year of study. My husband and family have been very supportive as have the University’s lecturers and staff.

“I would particularly like to thank my lecturers Dr Bill Wilson and Professor David Carment, and Sharon Reid in Student Administration for their help throughout my degree.”

“Education is not a product; it is a process. My university education has taught me how to think not learn. It has taught me how to approach problems head on and to not be afraid of challenging traditional ideas and attitudes.

“Life is a learning process; the day you stop learning is the day you take your last breath.”

Sharon McGregor, with her mother Gail O’Halloran, stands out among the 1946 graduates of Australia’s newest university.
Aboriginal health, or the lack of it, is an issue of national priority but according to Mr Roman not all areas that fall under the broad umbrella of Aboriginal health are being given the same priority.

He says Aboriginal men are lucky if they live beyond 50 and believes that many of these early deaths, particularly those of urban Aboriginals, are unnecessary and due to the neglect of individual health.

So it’s the neglect of personal health where Mr Roman’s PhD discovery begins, finding out at what point of illness do Aboriginal men decide to use healthcare services, what is it that influences or prevents Indigenous men accessing healthcare services and, once in the system, how those services cater for the individual.

“This is an area that I believe has been neglected in terms of research. Health of Indigenous women and children generally are areas well-researched. Health and health services in remote areas are also well represented, but how and why urban Aboriginal men access healthcare providers is an area that is pretty much untouched,” he said.

“Small health issues can grow quickly in environments where it is the mindset that you don’t go to the doctor or whoever to get help - here a man is supposed to be able to look after himself.

“That’s part of what I’m looking at - how do you change the mindset so that men will go to the doctor or health professional to avoid getting ill rather than going when they are very ill?”

Mr Roman, who is being supervised by Dr Allan Arnott, said influences to accessing healthcare varied among Aboriginal men but common reasons included socio-economic, gender, communication and cultural issues.

Previous experiences within the system also play a big part in determining use of health services.

“Men often feel intimidated and uncomfortable in the surroundings they find themselves in when attending healthcare facilities or dealing with health professionals,” Mr Roman explained.

“That discomfort in itself is enough to drive the individual away from the service.

When you weigh in other factors such as language, gender issues - in some instances men can’t be treated by women, affordability and physical access, it is little surprise that Aboriginal men do not make use of healthcare facilities or professionals,” he said.

An expectation of healthcare among Indigenous people is another component of the problem.

“Because Aboriginal people have received substandard health services for so long their expectations of such are low,” Mr Roman commented. “They don’t necessarily expect to be well-looked after or even appreciate that they are entitled to quality healthcare like every other Australian.”

That’s not to say that healthcare services available to Aboriginal men and their families in Darwin is not of quality standard but Mr Roman believes there is room for improvement.

“There needs to be more work done in promoting health services and promoting them in culturally appropriate ways so that men are encouraged to use them,” he said.

“There also need to be an emphasis on educating men on health issues so that they take responsibility for their health.”

Curtis Roman, right, believes Indigenous health, or the lack of it, is an issue of national priority but according to Mr Roman not all areas that fall under the broad umbrella of Aboriginal health are being given the same priority. He says Aboriginal men are lucky if they live beyond 50 and believes that many of these early deaths, particularly those of urban Aboriginals, are unnecessary and due to the neglect of individual health. So it’s the neglect of personal health where Mr Roman’s PhD discovery begins, finding out at what point of illness do Aboriginal men decide to use healthcare services, what is it that influences or prevents Indigenous men accessing healthcare services and, once in the system, how those services cater for the individual. ”

“This is an area that I believe has been neglected in terms of research. Health of Indigenous women and children generally are areas well-researched. Health and health services in remote areas are also well represented, but how and why urban Aboriginal men access healthcare providers is an area that is pretty much untouched,” he said.

“Small health issues can grow quickly in environments where it is the mindset that you don’t go to the doctor or whoever to get help - here a man is supposed to be able to look after himself. “That’s part of what I’m looking at - how do you change the mindset so that men will go to the doctor or health professional to avoid getting ill rather than going when they are very ill?”

Mr Roman, who is being supervised by Dr Allan Arnott, said influences to accessing healthcare varied among Aboriginal men but common reasons included socio-economic, gender, communication and cultural issues. Previous experiences within the system also play a big part in determining use of health services.

“Men often feel intimidated and uncomfortable in the surroundings they find themselves in when attending healthcare facilities or dealing with health professionals,” Mr Roman explained.

“That discomfort in itself is enough to drive the individual away from the service.

When you weigh in other factors such as language, gender issues - in some instances men can’t be treated by women, affordability and physical access, it is little surprise that Aboriginal men do not make use of healthcare facilities or professionals,” he said.

An expectation of healthcare among Indigenous people is another component of the problem.

“Because Aboriginal people have received substandard health services for so long their expectations of such are low,” Mr Roman commented. “They don’t necessarily expect to be well-looked after or even appreciate that they are entitled to quality healthcare like every other Australian.”

That’s not to say that healthcare services available to Aboriginal men and their families in Darwin is not of quality standard but Mr Roman believes there is room for improvement.

“There needs to be more work done in promoting health services and promoting them in culturally appropriate ways so that men are encouraged to use them,” he said.

“There also need to be an emphasis on educating men on health issues so that they take responsibility for their health.”
In the past 12 months, Early Childhood lecturers Kathie Mair and Kim Chapman have assessed almost 100 children’s services employees, with just under half of those people achieving a full Certificate III in Community Services (Children’s Services), making them qualified to work in positions they often already occupy.

“In the NT there are just not enough qualified people but there are so many in the industry that have been working in children’s services for years,” Ms Mair said.

“The beauty of what we do as workplace assessors is give people recognised qualifications, where deserved, that they might not otherwise get,” she said.

But it’s not just a matter of visiting a day care centre, before or after school care centre, preschool or the home of a family day care worker, and ticking a few boxes.

Ms Chapman said they go to great lengths to ensure the awarding of certificates and diplomas are deserved.

Funded by the Department of Health and Community Services, the University has used components of the Community Services Training Package to identify the current competencies of applicants who have worked in the children’s services industry for the past three years. Assessment for the child care qualification of Certificate III and the Diploma is measured against the Children’s Services National Competency Standards.

“It’s not just a matter of going out and watching the staff member for a while and marking it off. We are there to validate the skills of the individual and we go to great lengths to assess that,” Ms Chapman explained.

Both women are experienced children’s services professionals themselves and both believe that what they do is just as much about staff self esteem and instilling pride in the profession as it is about validating skills.

“Gaining qualifications this way allows the staff and the centre to gain professional recognition without the staff member having to come off the floor and leave staff short. And it’s saying to these people that they are professionals and we value their contribution to the profession,” Ms Chapman commented.

“It also encourages further study by giving people the recognition they deserve.”

Raising the profile of the profession both within the industry and within the community has been another major focus of the children’s services workplace assessors this year.

“We look after the most precious commodity on earth – our children, and we need to be proud of that and promote that,” Ms Mair stated.

“Children’s services is a career, not just a job. It’s not a babysitting service.”

“The amount of time that goes into each individual child, every program that helps the development and growth of each child, is what sets these qualified people apart from baby sitters. It’s what makes them professionals.”

Workplace assessment and a recognised prior learning website are two methods Charles Darwin University has instigated to address the serious issue of qualified children’s services staff in the Northern Territory.
How do Indigenous students establish an identity in a higher education setting when the environment doesn’t necessarily understand or offer appropriate support for their culture, language or identity?

Linda Ford holds three degrees and lectures at Charles Darwin University and has been faced with this very question herself.

The unanswered thought that has hounded her since entering the higher education sector to gain qualifications as a teacher has now manifested itself as the focus of her PhD studies.

“Part of the concern is that Indigenous knowledge and culture is not of great consideration for mainstream programs. In Indigenous specific courses it is obviously accommodated, but in mainstream areas it’s not. Indigenous pedagogy is the key to delivering core curriculum that engages Indigenous students.

“We need more Indigenous academics integrated into areas that are considered mainstream to begin with so they are able to pass their knowledge on to teacher education students and their colleagues. This creates a space in the tertiary sector where Indigenous knowledge, culture and identity is valued.”

A major part of her research project was conducted through the unit Linda and Tanyah Nasir deliver - Language and Culture in Educational Settings - where students, lecturers and community guests, including several of Linda’s family, have discussed the impact of language and culture on the higher education sector.

The action research unveiled that problems with supporting language, culture and identity begin well before students arrive at higher education.

First year students Glenn Randall and John Anstess are studying double degrees, the Bachelor of Education and the Bachelor of Science, and said such issues grow even before education begins.

“Many young Indigenous parents have no real connection to school education themselves as the education system has let them down as kids. Then their kids are put into environments where there are not many, if any, Indigenous teachers. There might be Aboriginal teachers’ aides or groundsman, but no actual classroom teachers who have an understanding of the culture these kids are coming from,” Mr Randall said.

“Schools need to employ more Indigenous teaching staff so young Aboriginals have role models and have people that can give them appropriate support,” said Mr Anstess.

“Indigenous studies and perspectives have to be compulsory learning for pre-service teachers. A comprehensive learning is required especially in a place like the Territory.”

In their presentation to the action research, Glenn and John expressed their disappointment at general Indigenous experiences especially at the high school level.

Mr Randall said, “Literacy and numeracy are obvious issues but when you consider that the lack of these skills often cause embarrassment, you then have a situation where the student will not want to attend school just to avoid being embarrassed again.”
Tertiary access for success

“Their self esteem is already low because expectations of Indigenous groups of their own success is low - it just compounds the issue.

“Because we’re Indigenous many teachers automatically think we’re dumb. Everyone it seems, expects us to fail from the start so our experience of being encouraged, accepted and made to feel that our culture, knowledge and identity are valued is not there.”

Julie Turner, a mature-age student participating in the project said she was made to feel incapable of coping with tertiary study in a mainstream course such as teaching and was offered a bridging course when she was already degree qualified.

“There is an urgent need for Australian university staff and lecturers to be made more cross-culturally aware. A whole of university approach is critical in helping to tackle Indigenous access to tertiary education,” she stated.

Denezla Canuto and Tanya Peris are second year Bachelor of Education students and said it’s not just an issue of access, but one of feeling comfortable once in the higher education environment.

“Access to tertiary studies doesn’t stop once you are in the front doors. If anything that’s just the beginning of it,” Ms Canuto explained.

“How we learn through oral and interactive methods instead of straight theory needs to be considered. Different teaching styles and balancing the priorities of cultural and family expectations and responsibilities with the university workload – well it’s just complex and there’s no easy answer.

“However, creating an environment where you feel you belong makes the difference. Getting through is about belonging because when you’re one Indigenous face in a group of 20 you can feel alone. When you have another coloured face, be it a student or lecturer, it’s great,” she commented.

And although Ms Ford is yet to finish her thesis she believes there has already been some success.

“An outcome from this innovative program has seen an eight per cent increase in Indigenous students numbers in the Faculty,” Ms Ford said.

“More importantly outcomes for Indigenous students have improved significantly. In 2003 progress rates for Indigenous students in the Faculty increased from 50 per cent in the previous year to 60 per cent. Also attrition rates for Indigenous students studying in the Faculty have been dramatically reduced.

Dean of the Faculty, Professor Greg Hill, indicated that the work of Linda and her colleagues, which incorporates community inputs and engagement of students as part of the learning support team, is proving to be a real success story.

“As the program has developed over the last few years, the faculty has established a group of Indigenous academic staff who have become the role models and who have had the cultural knowledge necessary to develop the sorts of support networks that are successful with students,” Professor Hill said.

“The confidence and retention of students has increased and while we still have a long way to go, I have confidence that we are heading in the right direction and can make a difference.”

New approach: Indigenous research and education

An executive think tank of Indigenous leaders and greater support for Indigenous students earmark Charles Darwin University’s stronger commitment to Indigenous research and education.

The new advances expands the University’s shift in focus and effort in Indigenous interaction, education and research from a single faculty to a university-wide approach and follows consultation with Indigenous people within the Territory and nationally.

“The outcomes of these consultations and reflection on past practices has led to the judgement that the University can and should take the opportunity to ‘dare to be different’ and to start afresh,” Vice Chancellor Professor Helen Garnett said.

“We are considering how we might best engage with Indigenous communities and organisations, how should we provide and encourage more pathways into the University and how should we support and mentor Indigenous students and staff.

“We are also addressing the issue of how to enhance the understanding of cross-cultural issues through our staff induction program and our course offerings.

“A key issue for the University is the challenge of expanding the knowledge base and capacity for scholarship and research in areas important for Indigenous development.”

The executive think tank includes:

• Professor Mick Dodson, Professor of Indigenous Studies at the Australian National University;
• Professor Marcia Langton, Professor of Australian Indigenous Studies at the University of Melbourne;
• Mr Norman Fry of the Northern Land Council; and
• Mr David Ross of the Central Land Council.

The University will also be drawing on the expertise of senior university staff, members of existing Advisory Boards, Visiting Committees and other senior members of the Indigenous community, through workshops focused on improving outcomes in specific areas - for example activities in the development of health professionals.

Further to the University’s new organisational wide approach to Indigenous research and education, Meg Friel has taken up the newly established position of Coordinator Indigenous Support Programs at the University.

“The University has a significant enrolment of Indigenous students - both urban and remote based - with a range of different needs,” Ms Friel stated.

“Some of the outcomes I will be working toward across the University include greater literacy and numeracy, educational access and completions, professional development of staff involved in Indigenous education and involvement of Indigenous community members in educational decision-making.”

Born in Darwin, Ms Friel has previously worked with a number of organisations regarding Indigenous education including the Northern Territory Government, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and the University of Technology Sydney.

Ms Friel will also coordinate the University’s team of Indigenous Academic Support Lecturers, whose goals are to improve participation and success rates for Indigenous students. This group also plays an important role in the development and delivery of programs that explore Indigenous knowledge.

“Spread across the University’s campuses, regional centres and academic schools, this group provides support to help current and potential Indigenous students be aware of study opportunities, adapt to the study environment, meet the academic requirements of their course and respond to any questions,” Ms Friel said.

“Indigenous groups of their own success is low - it just compounds the issue.”

New approach: Indigenous research and education

An executive think tank of Indigenous leaders and greater support for Indigenous students earmark Charles Darwin University’s stronger commitment to Indigenous research and education.

The new advances expands the University’s shift in focus and effort in Indigenous interaction, education and research from a single faculty to a university-wide approach and follows consultation with Indigenous people within the Territory and nationally.

“The outcomes of these consultations and reflection on past practices has led to the judgement that the University can and should take the opportunity to ‘dare to be different’ and to start afresh,” Vice Chancellor Professor Helen Garnett said.

“We are considering how we might best engage with Indigenous communities and organisations, how should we provide and encourage more pathways into the University and how should we support and mentor Indigenous students and staff.

“We are also addressing the issue of how to enhance the understanding of cross-cultural issues through our staff induction program and our course offerings.

“A key issue for the University is the challenge of expanding the knowledge base and capacity for scholarship and research in areas important for Indigenous development.”

The executive think tank includes:

• Professor Mick Dodson, Professor of Indigenous Studies at the Australian National University;
• Professor Marcia Langton, Professor of Australian Indigenous Studies at the University of Melbourne;
• Mr Norman Fry of the Northern Land Council; and
• Mr David Ross of the Central Land Council.

The University will also be drawing on the expertise of senior university staff, members of existing Advisory Boards, Visiting Committees and other senior members of the Indigenous community, through workshops focused on improving outcomes in specific areas - for example activities in the development of health professionals.

Further to the University’s new organisational wide approach to Indigenous research and education, Meg Friel has taken up the newly established position of Coordinator Indigenous Support Programs at the University.

“The University has a significant enrolment of Indigenous students - both urban and remote based - with a range of different needs,” Ms Friel stated.

“Some of the outcomes I will be working toward across the University include greater literacy and numeracy, educational access and completions, professional development of staff involved in Indigenous education and involvement of Indigenous community members in educational decision-making.”

Born in Darwin, Ms Friel has previously worked with a number of organisations regarding Indigenous education including the Northern Territory Government, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and the University of Technology Sydney.

Ms Friel will also coordinate the University’s team of Indigenous Academic Support Lecturers, whose goals are to improve participation and success rates for Indigenous students. This group also plays an important role in the development and delivery of programs that explore Indigenous knowledge.

“Spread across the University’s campuses, regional centres and academic schools, this group provides support to help current and potential Indigenous students be aware of study opportunities, adapt to the study environment, meet the academic requirements of their course and respond to any questions,” Ms Friel said.

“Indigenous groups of their own success is low - it just compounds the issue.”

New approach: Indigenous research and education

An executive think tank of Indigenous leaders and greater support for Indigenous students earmark Charles Darwin University’s stronger commitment to Indigenous research and education.

The new advances expands the University’s shift in focus and effort in Indigenous interaction, education and research from a single faculty to a university-wide approach and follows consultation with Indigenous people within the Territory and nationally.

“The outcomes of these consultations and reflection on past practices has led to the judgement that the University can and should take the opportunity to ‘dare to be different’ and to start afresh,” Vice Chancellor Professor Helen Garnett said.

“We are considering how we might best engage with Indigenous communities and organisations, how should we provide and encourage more pathways into the University and how should we support and mentor Indigenous students and staff.

“We are also addressing the issue of how to enhance the understanding of cross-cultural issues through our staff induction program and our course offerings.

“A key issue for the University is the challenge of expanding the knowledge base and capacity for scholarship and research in areas important for Indigenous development.”

The executive think tank includes:

• Professor Mick Dodson, Professor of Indigenous Studies at the Australian National University;
• Professor Marcia Langton, Professor of Australian Indigenous Studies at the University of Melbourne;
• Mr Norman Fry of the Northern Land Council; and
• Mr David Ross of the Central Land Council.

The University will also be drawing on the expertise of senior university staff, members of existing Advisory Boards, Visiting Committees and other senior members of the Indigenous community, through workshops focused on improving outcomes in specific areas - for example activities in the development of health professionals.

Further to the University’s new organisational wide approach to Indigenous research and education, Meg Friel has taken up the newly established position of Coordinator Indigenous Support Programs at the University.

“The University has a significant enrolment of Indigenous students - both urban and remote based - with a range of different needs,” Ms Friel stated.

“Some of the outcomes I will be working toward across the University include greater literacy and numeracy, educational access and completions, professional development of staff involved in Indigenous education and involvement of Indigenous community members in educational decision-making.”

Born in Darwin, Ms Friel has previously worked with a number of organisations regarding Indigenous education including the Northern Territory Government, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and the University of Technology Sydney.

Ms Friel will also coordinate the University’s team of Indigenous Academic Support Lecturers, whose goals are to improve participation and success rates for Indigenous students. This group also plays an important role in the development and delivery of programs that explore Indigenous knowledge.

“Spread across the University’s campuses, regional centres and academic schools, this group provides support to help current and potential Indigenous students be aware of study opportunities, adapt to the study environment, meet the academic requirements of their course and respond to any questions,” Ms Friel said.

“Indigenous groups of their own success is low - it just compounds the issue.”
The ability to conserve and manage sea turtles around the world is constrained by a lack of information on some population dynamics, particularly age-specific survival rates,” said Ms Palaniappan who is on study leave from her lecturer position at the Borneo Marine Research Institute at Universiti Malaysia Sabah.

Made of flattened bones and covered by horny plates called scutes, a turtle’s shell consists of two parts: a carapace that covers the turtle’s back and a plastron that covers the turtle’s stomach and abdomen.

Ms Palaniappan’s research is on the Hawksbill turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata* as its thick and imbricate or overlapping scutes are best suited for her research. “My research will describe the laying down of keratin - which is the same material that makes up human fingernails and hair - in the carapacial scutes and the seasonal changes that occur in the rate of deposition of a black pigment called melanin as a function of age and size.

“This in turn will, potentially, allow us to quickly estimate the population age-structure for the first time, without needing to embark on mark-recapture experiments, which take decades to complete,” Ms Palaniappan said.

With a distinctive hawk-like beak, the Hawksbill is a small to medium sized tropical turtle that feeds primarily on sponges and algae. With shell lengths up to 90 centimetres, they are found from Japan to Australia and the British Isles to southern Brazil. In Australia, they occur in northern tropical waters and half way down the continent’s east and west coast.

Nationally, the Hawksbill turtle’s conservation status is regarded as vulnerable. For centuries the Hawksbill’s brightly coloured, thick scutes covering the carapace were a source of ‘tortoise-shell’ used to make jewellery. With restrictions, international trade in tortoise-shell has significantly decreased but human exploitation of the nesting grounds and pollution pose long-term threats to its survival.

Ms Palaniappan’s first stage of fieldwork, after gaining ethics clearance, a permit from NT Parks and Wildlife and permission from the Traditional Owners, involved the harvesting Hawksbill turtle eggs from the North East Isles off of Grote Eyland.

“For the two clutches of eggs that were collected, more than 100 hatchlings were born in early March and April this year and are being kept at Crocodylus Park for research.”

Crocodylus Park is run by Darwin-based company Wildlife Management International and headed by Professor Grahame Webb who is an Adjunct Professor at Charles Darwin University.

The second stage of her fieldwork scheduled for late June 2004, will see Ms Palaniappan go out to Vernon Islands located in the Clarence Strait between the Tiwi Islands and Darwin to catch juvenile and adult Hawksbill turtles.

“We will take some scute samples from a number of turtles as well as keeping some turtles, in line with appropriate permits and permissions, so that we can observe any changes in the scute that may occur when the turtles are moved from the wild to captivity." Ms Palaniappan hopes to complete her research by July 2006.

Research on remote islands off the Northern Territory’s coast may finally be unlocking the secrets of one of the oceans longest living and most endearing animals.
The Tropical Savannas Cooperative Research Centre based at Charles Darwin University’s Casuarina Campus has secured more than $3 million to help northern Australians better manage major natural resource issues like bushfires, cattle grazing and Indigenous knowledge conservation.

“This is one of the most significant investments in innovative natural resource management that north Australia has seen in the last few years,” Research Centre Chief Executive, Professor Gordon Duff, said.

The funds are for three projects that will run over the next two to three years.

Bushfire information for north Australia
$1.9 million from the Federal Government’s Natural Heritage Trust will be used to develop guidelines for good practice in managing tropical fires and to develop information tools, including websites, to make sure up-to-date bushfire information can be accessed by people across north Australia. Currently intense wildfires and fire patterns that are either too frequent or too infrequent are threatening biodiversity and production throughout Australia’s north.

More than 80 per cent of the country burnt by wildfires every year in Australia is in the savannas.

“To help people track fires, we will have an improved version of the North Australia Fire Information Site (www.northfire.org.au/nafi) which uses signals from satellites to produce maps showing where bushfires are burning, in real time, and where they have burnt out country leaving blackened scars,” said Professor Duff.

Another website will be a one-stop-shop for information on how best to manage country in the fire-prone savannas of north Australia. A third site will have information for the general public on northern bushfires.

Working with land managers in the East Kimberley
$870,000 from Land and Water Australia has been dedicated to help people manage cattle country in the East Kimberley. The Indigenous Land Corporation and the WA Department of Agriculture will also be contributing $120,000 and $130,000 respectively to the project.

Much of the project will involve researchers and land managers working together on finding better ways of managing pastoral properties so they are viable but also conserve biodiversity and key species and sites of cultural significance. Land managers will use an innovative combination of new technologies such as satellite remote-sensing and computer-based information as well as ways of strengthening local and Indigenous knowledge.

The project will also investigate what new institutions and policies may be needed to help people on the ground achieve these goals. The project will involve various local organisations and agencies.

Building on, conserving and applying Indigenous knowledge across the north
Finally, the recently established North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance and the research Centre have received $300,000 from Land and Water Australia to help build Indigenous knowledge capacity across north Australia.

The Alliance brings together a range of people working on Indigenous land and sea management across the north, including Land Councils, Indigenous ranger groups and local communities and is coordinated by Mr Joe Morrison, based with the Tropical Savannas at Charles Darwin University.

“This funding marks a major step forward for Indigenous knowledge conservation in the north” said Mr Morrison.

“The project will consult with Traditional Owners to develop a north Australian strategy so Indigenous people can maintain, use, and promote indigenous knowledge systems alongside contemporary natural resource management.”

The project will document the needs and aspirations of traditional owners regarding the conservation of knowledge in their communities; it will identify constraints that prevent Indigenous knowledge being used in, and engaging with, broader natural resource management research and development across north Australia and it will develop strategies to overcome these constraints.

The project will also develop ways to conserve Indigenous knowledge and to apply it to integrated natural resource management at the local, regional and north Australia levels.
Darwin’s next big thing

After the excitement of the completion of the Adelaide to Darwin railway line has settled, one of the next big projects Darwinians are eyeing is the development of the City’s harbour.

Just as the train has given the commercial port facilities at East Arm a new lease on life by connecting Asia with Australia’s southern cities and making Darwin a true gateway to the north, so the Darwin City Waterfront Development will reinvigorate the City’s sense of itself as a harbour city by connecting it to the water’s edge.

“In recent years, literally all over the world, there have been a number of developments concentrating on refashioning disused wharf and harbour facilities,” said Professor Ian Buchanan, Professor in Communication and Cultural Studies at Charles Darwin University.

In Australia, Darling Harbour led the way, and has been emulated several times over in Sydney and elsewhere. The Docklands development in Melbourne, which has been criticised by a number of people for building too many units too fast, viewed in its proper perspective will ultimately make Melbourne a harbour city too by extending the central business district to Port Melbourne itself.

“The Darwin waterfront development clearly hopes to replicate the commercial success of these southern ventures, as well as avoid their pitfalls, but wants something distinctively ‘tropical’ from its developers too.”

“At close to a foot long, the giant black tiger prawns being raised at Charles Darwin University represent successful industry moves toward developing substantial disease free prawn stocks in the NT.

The cooperative venture seeks Suntay Aquaculture utilising the University’s facilities for the quarantine and disease testing of black tiger prawn spawners sourced from Northern Territory waters.

Previously, the Territory’s industry has relied on seed stock imported from Queensland, some of which carried viruses that do not affect people, but reduce prawn growth and survival. The research effort at the University seeks to give farmers a major advantage with access to disease free NT stock.

The NT Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries, Mr Kon Vatskalis said that the culture of collaboration between industry and the University was further developing through this project.

“The result is a prawn aquaculture industry that is expanding locally and becoming more self-reliant,” Mr Vatskalis said.

The NT Minister for Fisheries, Kon Vatskalis and the University’s Reggie Markham thinking big diversity to other prawn species and several new farms are in the process of establishment.

“Suntay Aquaculture is pioneering a fully closed farming system - over 100 hectares - at Point Ceylon (Bynoe harbour) and there is also a new farm at Blackmore River where 28 hectares is already under water and stocked with prawns,” Mr Vatskalis said.

The new farm is an example of industry best-practice featuring minimal to zero discharge, very little soil leaching, and complies with the latest Food and Agriculture code of responsibility, making it virtually a closed system.

“Suntay gains access to the University’s facilities in return for capital equipment and infrastructure provision, students have access to industry experts, improved employment opportunities and the opportunity to work in real commercial circumstances, and the aquaculture industry of the Northern Territory benefits from their combined outcomes,” Professor Hill explained.

Previously, only black tiger prawns were grown in the Territory and Mr Vatskalis said that one farm is looking to spell out, on the basis of international research, what the key factors are that promote a socially and culturally sustainable city development. Special emphasis was placed on the redevelopment of waterfront sites, but the general theme of social and cultural sustainability was the main focus.

“Understanding why that is the case and the implications it entails for development, was the kind of thing my research zeroed in on. Because of the timescale (the project had to be completed in a month so as to inform the tendering process) it wasn’t possible to investigate this as fully as I would have liked, but it did give me the chance to map out a number of future research projects that will I believe help inform Darwin’s re-visioning of itself as a destination in its own right.”

Professor Buchanan said the overall aim of the project was to spell out, on the basis of international research, what the key factors are that promote a socially and culturally sustainable city development. Special emphasis was placed on the redevelopment of waterfront sites, but the general theme of social and cultural sustainability was the main focus.

“Understanding why that is the case and the implications it entails for development, was the kind of thing my research zeroed in on. Because of the timescale (the project had to be completed in a month so as to inform the tendering process) it wasn’t possible to investigate this as fully as I would have liked, but it did give me the chance to map out a number of future research projects that will I believe help inform Darwin’s re-visioning of itself as a destination in its own right.”

Professor Buchanan said the overall aim of the project was to spell out, on the basis of international research, what the key factors are that promote a socially and culturally sustainable city development. Special emphasis was placed on the redevelopment of waterfront sites, but the general theme of social and cultural sustainability was the main focus.

“The Waterfront development is but a plank in the current government’s program to transform Darwin into a city that is not only great to live in, but an appealing tourist destination in its own right and ultimately an attractive place to locate businesses.”

“Suntay gains access to the University’s facilities in return for capital equipment and infrastructure provision, students have access to industry experts, improved employment opportunities and the opportunity to work in real commercial circumstances, and the aquaculture industry of the Northern Territory benefits from their combined outcomes,” Professor Hill explained.

Previously, only black tiger prawns were grown in the Territory and Mr Vatskalis said that one farm is looking to diversify to other prawn species and several new farms are in the process of establishment.

“Suntay Aquaculture is pioneering a fully closed farming system - over 100 hectares - at Point Ceylon (Bynoe harbour) and there is also a new farm at Blackmore River where 28 hectares is already under water and stocked with prawns,” Mr Vatskalis said.

The new farm is an example of industry best-practice featuring minimal to zero discharge, very little soil leaching, and complies with the latest Food and Agriculture code of responsibility, making it virtually a closed system.

The Minister says that this development, and the on-going research and co-operation between the industry, Charles Darwin University and the Territory Government paves the way for the future of prawn farming in the Top End.

He said that there were still considerable challenges ahead for the prawn farming industry in the Territory.

“However I am confident that the industry will meet them and take its place as an industry leader throughout Australia and South East Asia,” Mr Vatskalis said.
The University has been running successful contemporary music training programs in remote Indigenous communities throughout the Northern Territory for the last decade. With all necessary equipment to play, perform and record community music hauled onto the tray of a large truck, the program bases a University teacher in a community for two months to help remote students study all elements relative to the contemporary music industry including instrumental and singing lessons, business skills for royalties, copyright and protection of artistic property.

To help teach performance and technical skills, students stage and record a weekly live concert at a local venue such as the recreation hall or basketball court. The Yugul Band from Ngukurr is one of several Indigenous bands to have formed and now perform in a commercial capacity as a result of the University’s Remote Music Delivery Program.

While the Yugul Band - a rock and roll come laid back blues outfit featuring a mix of young and older musicians - first emerged in 1969, it was the University’s program and collaboration with Darwin based record label Skinnyfish Music which helped capture the regrouped band’s music for its 2003 debut CD: Blues Across the River.

Resulting from community performance sessions when the University’s program was at Ngukurr in 2002-03, the CD formed part of a successful application for the band to perform as part of the 2004 Adelaide Festival’s Indigenous music component. “There are plenty of young musicians here and we want to be the role models for them and we want to encourage them to be a part of the music industry,” Kevin Rogers, one of Yugul Band’s original and current vocalists, said.

As part of the Adelaide visit, the University’s Remote Music Coordinator and Producer of Blues Across the River, Stephen Teakle, also worked with the Yugul Band on a performance and workshop day at the University of Adelaide’s Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music to connect Territory and South Australian Indigenous musicians and students. “Remote Territory communities hold amazing talent, especially in regard to music, and working to open up the exchange of ideas and talent in Adelaide is an added bonus,” Mr Teakle said.

Further outcomes from the program include the Eppeneera Country Gospel Band which travelled to and performed at the Tamworth Country Music Festival. This was partly funded by selling their CD, which the students recorded at the University’s programs in the Barkly Region during mid 2003. Saltwater Band, Narbalek Band and Matter of Soul have also found success domestically and, in some cases, internationally.

It is exactly these types of industry outcomes from the Remote Indigenous Music Program that has attracted the talents of world-class pianist, composer and director, Mr Paul Grabowsky.

Returning from a recent visit to Ngukurr to view the impact of the Program first hand and meet local traditional musicians, Paul Grabowsky will be involved in the University’s School of Creative Arts and Humanities during the next two years to get first hand experience with Indigenous music while mentoring some students and staff. Popularly known for his role as music conductor on the former Tonight Live with Steve Vizard television program, Paul Grabowsky is professionally known for his wide range of musical talents and their applications including the Australian Art Orchestra he founded in 1994. The twenty piece Orchestra’s ground-breaking work across various musical genres heralded a new era in Australian music.

His involvement at Charles Darwin University will include helping to mentor and teach staff and students while actively expanding his passion for and knowledge of traditional Indigenous music through the University’s Remote Music Program.

Mr Grabowsky’s interest was sparked by a call from his former student, Stephen Teakle. “Stephen needed a specialist to help him complete his Honours in Improvised Piano and contacted his former Lecturer. Through their discussion, Paul became aware of and very interested in the remote music work that the University undertakes,” Mr Walter said.

Popularly known for his role as music conductor on the former Tonight Live with Steve Vizard television program, Paul Grabowsky is professionally known for his wide range of musical talents and their applications including the Australian Art Orchestra he founded in 1994. The twenty piece Orchestra’s ground-breaking work across various musical genres heralded a new era in Australian music.

“I am looking forward to the opportunity to sit down with practitioners of Indigenous music traditions and introduce the whole idea of improvised music through playing together,” Mr Grabowsky enthused.

“There may be opportunities of also engaging members of the Australian Art Orchestra, all of who are acknowledged masters in their field, with the aim of forging a commonality and trust which allows for the exchange of musical ideas across culture, language and practice.

“The future of Australian music may well hang on its ability to draw upon its most valuable and precious resource,” Mr Grabowsky stated.

“Popularly known for his role as music conductor on the former Tonight Live with Steve Vizard television program, Paul Grabowsky is professionally known for his wide range of musical talents and their applications including the Australian Art Orchestra he founded in 1994. The twenty piece Orchestra’s ground-breaking work across various musical genres heralded a new era in Australian music.

“I am looking forward to the opportunity to sit down with practitioners of Indigenous music traditions and introduce the whole idea of improvised music through playing together,” Mr Grabowsky enthused.

“There may be opportunities of also engaging members of the Australian Art Orchestra, all of who are acknowledged masters in their field, with the aim of forging a commonality and trust which allows for the exchange of musical ideas across culture, language and practice.

“The future of Australian music may well hang on its ability to draw upon its most valuable and precious resource,” Mr Grabowsky stated.

“The influence of Paul Grabowsky’s ideas and talents will provide an exciting element at the University,” Adrian Walter, Head of School, said.
Flowering bamboo can also be considered a portent of bad things to come - a belief that may be based in fact. “Famine often follows bamboo flowering in some regions because the prolific seeding encourages rat plagues that affect other crops and people’s food stores when the bamboo seed runs out.”

“From a scientific viewpoint, it is generally accepted that flowering is initiated by an internal or biological clock that operates largely independently of what’s happening around the stands. When its time to flower, that’s it – the stands must flower and die.”

However, Mr Franklin’s research consolidates this theory by explaining some of the other patterns that it doesn’t account for, in particular the strange phenomenon called a flowering wave, in which some patches flower one year and some the next and so on for sometimes up to ten years.

A flowering wave may develop when unpredictable events interact with the biological clock without permanently altering the clock setting, producing an off-set patch.

Off-set groups may only survive if sufficient individuals are off-set at the same time and in the same vicinity so as to produce a new synchronously-flowering patch.

Mr Franklin suggests that two processes could drive this disruption. Inter-year climatic variation like unusual heavy rain during the dry season may alter the biological... as suggested by the 1998 Katherine flood and the flowering of bamboo downstream on the Daly River that began in 2000.

Mr Franklin is also working with researchers from Hiroshima University in Japan to better understand the genetic make up of Australian bamboo species.

In collaboration with Associate Professors Yuji Isagi and Hiromi Tsubota from the Japanese University’s Faculty of Integrated Arts & Sciences, Mr Franklin is examining what Asian bamboo species are... might have arrived in Australia, understanding it’s spread across the landscape and how this relates to flowering patterns.

Samples of the Top End’s bamboo are currently being analysed at Hiroshima University with the collaborative team anticipated to finalise interpretation and writing up of results later in the year.

Bamboozled

Don Franklin, Charles Darwin University research fellow, has been investigating stands of Bambua arnhemica, the bamboo species endemic to the Northern Territory from the Daly River to Kakadu’s South Alligator River, as part of research sponsored by the NT Parks and Wildlife.

The Department’s interest was stirred as a result of interest in the harvest of young bamboo shoots from wild stands in the Territory, raising concerns about its sustainability.

The findings of Mr Franklin’s three year research project into bamboo flowering have recently been published in the British – based Journal of Biogeography.

“It’s not an easy subject to research because of the flowering is so infrequent and unpredictable until you know the cycle length and history.” Mr Franklin began.

Mr Franklin indicates that bamboo is different to most plants in that it can synchronise flowering after decades of being reproductively dormant. Whole stands of bamboo – which can be literally thousands of square kilometres - suddenly and synchronously burst into small pale yellow flowers and then die.

“Several Asian species manage to synchronise after more than a century of no flowering.”

It is also one of the world’s fastest growing organisms with a Japanese species holding the world record of 1.2 metres of growth in one day. Bamboo’s use is also surprisingly diverse. In Asia, the stem shoots are used by millions of people as a meal base like rice with shoots tinned to ensure a year-round supply. The mature stems are used for house construction, furniture, house flooring, pipes and musical instruments such as the didgeridoo.

A better understanding of bamboo flowering provides basic biology which should assist subsistence farmers and related industry, particularly in Asia and the Indian sub continent, to determine ways to cope with the phenomenon.

“Following flowering, the mature clumps die with the new generation taking between five to ten years to reach harvestable size. Five years with no income is a serious problem for a poor bamboo farmer.”

While formal research has previously been limited, there are lots of anecdotal reports and speculation on why bamboo flowering occurs so idiosyncratically.

Some culturally based explanations attribute bamboo flowering to drought or sun-spot activity.

“In India the drought theory has quite a following due to people remembering that when a drought and flowering coincided, many survived by eating bamboo seed.”

Flowering bamboo can also be considered a portent of bad things to come - a belief that may be based in fact.

“Famine often follows bamboo flowering in some regions because the prolific seeding encourages rat plagues that affect other crops and people’s food stores when the bamboo seed runs out.”

“From a scientific viewpoint, it is generally accepted that flowering is initiated by an internal or biological clock that operates largely independently of what’s happening around the stands. When its time to flower, that’s it – the stands must flower and die.”

However, Mr Franklin’s research consolidates this theory by explaining some of the other patterns that it doesn’t account for, in particular the strange phenomenon called a flowering wave, in which some patches flower one year and some the next and so on for sometimes up to ten years.

A flowering wave may develop when unpredictable events interact with the biological clock without permanently altering the clock setting, producing an off-set patch.

Off-set groups may only survive if sufficient individuals are off-set at the same time and in the same vicinity so as to produce a new synchronously-flowering patch.

Mr Franklin suggests that two processes could drive this disruption. Inter-year climatic variation like unusual heavy rain during the dry season may alter the biological clock’s perception of time, producing off-sets at local or regional scales or even affecting entire populations. Severe environmental pressures may also disrupt flowering schedules, as suggested by the 1998 Katherine flood and the flowering of bamboo downstream on the Daly River that began in 2000.

Mr Franklin is also working with researchers from Hiroshima University in Japan to better understand the genetic make up of Australian bamboo species.

In collaboration with Associate Professors Yuji Isagi and Hiromi Tsubota from the Japanese University’s Faculty of Integrated Arts & Sciences, Mr Franklin is examining what Asian bamboo species Bambua arnhemica is related to, how and when it might have arrived in Australia, understanding it’s spread across the landscape and how this relates to flowering patterns.

Samples of the Top End’s bamboo are currently being analysed at Hiroshima University with the collaborative team anticipated to finalise interpretation and writing up of results later in the year.
Charles Darwin University’s music department has welcomed the addition of two new prized instruments and a new musical director for the Darwin Youth Orchestra.

A new two metre long, $30,000 grand concert piano was delivered in mid November and is housed in the Charles Darwin University Theatre. It was publicly launched as part of the department’s final 2003 concert in December featuring Chen Hui, the School’s Lecturer in Piano, on the new instrument. “The new piano is a quality instrument and will be invaluable to helping Darwin’s music students realise their full potential,” Hui said.

A hand-crafted harpsichord specially built to withstand Darwin’s tropical climate has also been purchased by the University. “The instrument was built by Allistar McAllister - one of Australia’s leading harpsichord makers who also built the harpsichord for the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra,” Adrian Walter, Head of the University’s School of Creative Arts and Humanities, said.

“The instrument has been custom-made for life in the tropics. The woods selected have been sourced by one of the world’s major manufacturers and the glues used will withstand our unique climate,” Mr Walter said.

The Australian Pipeline Trust / NT Gas made a very generous donation to the University’s School of Music to establish a NT community-driven Harpsichord Fundraising initiative.

This donation, together with several other corporate donations and community contributions has meant that a Zukermann German double manual harpsichord “kit” could be purchased and specifically assembled for our community. The instrument is a copy of a Flemish Double Manual Harpsichord made famous by the Rucker Family during the 16th-18th centuries.

The department has approximately 500 students drawn from a range of programs including Indigenous students from remote areas and students as young as three.
years of age who undertake music lessons at the University as part of their pre-primary school activities.

"Both the new grand piano and the harpsichord are fantastic additions to the music department. We look forward to sharing their sounds with students and the general public as part of our 2004 Concert Series being held from April to November," Mr Walter said.

After performing with the world famous Grimethorpe Colliery Band which featured in the hit film Brassed Off, the Darwin Youth Orchestra’s new musical director, Andrew Snell, is looking forward to developing local musical talent in Darwin.

Relocating from New Zealand, Mr Snell has taken up the role of Lecturer in Brass and Musicianship within the Charles Darwin University’s School of Creative Arts and Humanities - a diverse role which works with the Darwin Symphony Orchestra, Darwin Youth Orchestra and Centre for Youth Music.

"The Darwin Youth Orchestra has an exciting concert programme in place for later this year which will hopefully include music from Brassed Off to feature our new brass section," Mr Snell said.

"Looking further out, discussions are also underway regarding an overseas Darwin Youth Orchestra tour in 2005 or 2006."

Mr Snell has taught music at all levels since leaving the University of Salford in England where he attained a BA (Hons) in Band Musicianship. He gained the majority of his playing experience from 11 years on bass trombone with the Grimethorpe Colliery Band.

During the past two years Mr Snell has successfully developed the Sentinel Auckland Brass Academy in New Zealand from a one-school seven pupil dream to a 22-school 150 pupil reality.

"The sole purpose of the Academy was to promote music to the youth of Auckland by involving schools, businesses and the wider community. It ended up being very successful and I felt that I had achieved more than I could ever have hoped for," Mr Snell said.

"So when the opportunity came up in Darwin I jumped at the chance."

While Mr Snell’s main priority for the Darwin Youth Orchestra is to develop a thriving brass section, the Orchestra welcomes extra string, woodwind and percussion players.

For anyone interested in joining the Darwin Youth Orchestra all they need to do is phone the Centre for Youth Music office on 8946 7045 to request an open audition form.

Research on ensuring the availability of raw materials to produce Indigenous art has been boosted with $27,000 in a scholarship and grant awarded to Charles Darwin University PhD student, Jennifer Koeing.

Ms Koeing was awarded the $18,000 Australian Federation of University Women Queensland Commemorative Scholarship and a $9000 Australian Institute of Nuclear Science and Engineering Award.

She indicated that both will help complete the final year of her PhD titled ‘Timber harvest management for the Aboriginal Arts Industry in central Arnhem Land’.

"The Aboriginal arts industry is one of few development opportunities for Indigenous people in remote communities yet there has been limited research that has combined assessment of the social, ecological and economic factors of arts production sustainability," Ms Koenig said.

Many of the arts produced at remote communities such as bark paintings, wooden carvings, weaving and dyes are derived from native plants. The continued supply of these species acts as a critical component in the continued success of the industry.

Ms Koeing’s PhD focuses on the Maningrida region of central Arnhem Land where a range of cultural artefact products are almost totally dependent on naturally occurring raw materials. One of the fastest growing sectors of local production is the carving of timber to produce wooden sculptures. The first carving was sold in Maningrida in the late 1970s and production has been increasing rapidly from then on.

"In 2000-2001 there were more than 1200 carvings purchased from local artists representing about 1200 tree stems," Ms Koenig said.

Discovering more about the life cycle of the plants used is also a critical component and this will be enhanced by the AINSE scholarship.

"Given the growth of sculpture sales in the past few decades there is a need to assess sustainability in light of commercial viability pressures and private income benefit for producers."

Research on ensuring the availability of raw materials to produce Indigenous art has been boosted with $27,000 in a scholarship and grant awarded to Charles Darwin University PhD student, Jennifer Koeing.
“I had almost completed the first draft when figures were released showing a 33 per cent increase in the Indigenous imprisonment rate making it obvious that something is not working in the Territory,” explained Mr Gray, who is also a Senior Law Lecturer at Charles Darwin University.

Opening with a history of Northern Territory Criminal Law, subsequent chapters in *Criminal Laws Northern Territory* delve into customary law, criminal responsibility, mandatory sentencing, property offices and public order, sexual offences and more.

“The past two years have seen significant changes to the laws affecting mental impairment, diminished responsibility, fitness to plead and self-defence. These changes have been incorporated into this book,” Mr Gray said.

“Hopefully I have captured a clear and concise account of the Criminal Law of the Northern Territory in a readable and accessible law text.”

*Criminal Laws Northern Territory* follows on from Mr Gray’s first two fictional novels. *Lungfish* won the 1998 Jessie Litchfield Award for Literature. His second novel, *The Artist is a Thief* - which deals with the question of appropriation or theft of indigenous art - won The Australian Vogel Literary Award in 2000. In 2002 he was named as one of the Sydney Morning Herald’s best young novelists.

As a member of the NT Law Reform Committee, Mr Gray worked last year on the Committee examining the issue of recognition of traditional laws. Prior to this he was a member of the Committee which the Report of the Northern Territory Law Reform Committee on Alternative Dispute Resolution on Aboriginal Communities.

One of three new publications that Charles Darwin University Press has on offer includes Ivan Jordan’s *Their way: towards an Indigenous Warlpiri Christianity*. The book is a story about some of the desert people of Central Australia expressing their Christian faith their way. It is also about our struggle both as non-Indigenous and as Christian communicators to understand that way, and relate meaningfully to it.

Reverend Tim Costello comments that Ivan Jordan has made a most remarkable journey.

“As a Baptist missionary, Ivan was schooled in all the interpretations and traditions of 2000 years of Christianity that instinctively assumed that our European models were privileged with superior insight and practice,” Reverend Costello said.

“Yet he has deliberately been prepared to set this aside and listen and learn. The humility of the book shines through.”

Chairman of the Aboriginal and Islander Baptist Conference of Australia, Reverend Graham Paulson, describes the book as “essential reading for any serious study of the history of the church among Australia’s Indigenous people.”

The second new publication at Charles Darwin University Press is *Fishers of Garogos* by Hernien Soselisa. The book is based on research conducted on Garogos, a small sand island off the eastern end of the large central Maluku island of Sera. Maluku is immediately west of Irian Jaya.

Through the book Hermein provides insights into the customary marine tenures claimed by islanders, their varied strategies of dealing with the problems of meeting the subsistence needs of the household and vagaries of the commercial market for sea resources.

Hernien is an anthropologist with the Maluku Studies Centre at Pattimura University in Ambon. A graduate of Gadja Mada University, she holds a PhD from Charles Darwin University. The manuscript for this book was completed while she was a Research Associate of the Centre for Indigenous Natural and Cultural Resource management at Charles Darwin.

The book is a valuable case study of an isolated and impoverished community that is nonetheless dependent upon the outside world for its very existence.

*The Evolution of Darwin 1869 – 1911* by Kathy De La Rue is a third publication on offer. Launched by His Worship the Lord Mayor of Darwin, Mr Peter Adamson in April, the author is a well known Darwin librarian and historian.

*The Evolution of Darwin, 1869 - 1911* is a history of the Northern Territory’s capital city during the years of the South Australian administration. It covers the period from “the biggest land grab in Australian history” to the takeover of the Territory by the Commonwealth government in 1911.

These books can be ordered through Charles Darwin University Press through www.cdu.edu.au/bookshop/about.html
If you use email no doubt you experience the pest of the Internet which is spam.

Professionals refer to the pest as unsolicited commercial email to stress that it is not so much the often offensive content that matters but the fact that users never ask to be sent this kind of email.

“Although the spam problem has been underestimated for quite some time, there is now quite a bit of research going on,” said Dr Christopher Lueg, CSC Chair in e-business at Charles Darwin University.

An active spam fighter since 1995, Dr Lueg believes his team is the first to scientifically explore the disturbing impacts of spam filters with communication an important topic within his Interactive Business Research program.

“Costs caused by spam have been estimated to be billions of dollars per annum and there is also some preliminary research on the effect spam has on email users. Some users said they use email less than they were used to and a few actually stopped using email.

“There are also different ways how users handle spam: some just drown in unwanted messages but most have their messages spam-filtered, either by themselves, by the IT guy in the office or by the Internet service provider - you may not even be aware that filtering is applied to your messages!”

Apart from reducing the spam load, however, there are also unwanted effects by spam filtering as genuine messages may end up in ‘spam folders’ or may not get delivered at all.

“Spam filtering is getting out of control. Imagine the postie throwing away some of your letters because they look suspicious. Many would find this unacceptable.

“Our research suggests that spam filtering may even contribute to establishing the ‘Digital Divide’ as some filters actually remove whatever comes from whole countries having a track record in sending or relaying spam messages.

Most of these countries are located in South-East Asia, South America and Eastern Europe and people living in these countries may have difficulties sending email to users in Western countries.”

Dr Lueg will be presenting the latest results regarding unwanted effects of spam-filters at a Computer Sciences Corporation Research Meeting in Philadelphia in June and at the prestigious Annual Meeting of the American Society for Information Science and Technology in Providence/Rhode Island in November.

Dr Nicola Bidwell, Senior Lecturer in IT and Dr Christopher Lueg, Professor in IT and CSC Chair in E-Business at Charles Darwin University, are working on a novel approach to help people navigate unfamiliar terrain such as an unknown city, campus or countryside.

“This is novel because unlike most other navigation systems, our approach presents information from the user’s perspective meaning what you see is where you go,” Dr Lueg said.

“This is the same first-person perspective Doom players enjoy so much as it feels so natural!”

However, for the two academics ‘situated ego-centric navigation’ is serious research as presenting information from the user’s point of view means users do not face the problem they have with traditional systems.

“For example typical car-navigation systems present abstract maps consisting of blocks and lines instead of what people see in front of them: buildings, walls, trees, places, doors, etc,” said Dr Lueg.

Dr Bidwell explains: “It is natural for people to help each other to find places by referring to things in the world from their own perspective rather than as if they were seen from a birds eye view.”

“As we explore this area we realise we are learning a lot of new things about how people use information in their environment in order to move through it.

“We are also learning how we can build computer devices that enable people to work together better while they are on the move”

When fully operational, it is expected that the system will have quite a few application areas from navigation support in tourism or mining to web site design.

“This work is a great example of basic research contributing to our Interactive Business Research”, Professor Lueg said.

“As far as we know, we are the first to explore navigation from this particular situated perspective”

“Peer-reviewing of our papers at international conferences confirms this is state-of-the-art research combining IT research into mobile devices and human thinking in a novel way!”

Professor Lueg will be presenting the latest results regarding this research at the Asia-Pacific Conference on Human-Computer Interaction in Rotorua, New Zealand on 30 June 2004.
Acknowledges his thesis, Positron-atom interactions studied using Dr. Bromley’s award

Dr. Michael Bromley, has been awarded the Australian Institute of Physics’ 2003 Bragg Medal for the best PhD thesis from an Australian university.

Ms Dyer is the first student to take part in the $2500 Award which provides a salary for a student to work with established researchers at the University, CSIRO or NT Government’s Department of Business, Industry and Resource Development part-time over the summer or mid-semester break.

As part of the learning process, Ms Dyer cultured periwinkle plants with a bacterial-like disease that causes papaya dieback. She then used a molecular diagnostic technique to detect a gene that is specific for this disease organism.

“My supervisors supported me with full appreciation of my skills and current knowledge, giving me guidance when I needed it and enough information for me to solve problems without ‘force-feeding’ me the solutions,” Ms Dyer said.

“I was extremely fortunate to be able to research in Darwin under the guidance of Dr. Jim Mitroy,” said Dr Bromley.

“At the end of the learning process I had a really good understanding of the disease organism and its impact on the plant material, which I can then use in the future to help others,” Ms Dyer said.

“Tissue culture is a really useful technique for maintaining disease free plant stocks and for fast propagation of imported plant material,” said Associate Professor Karen Gibb.

For details about the Award please contact Associate Professor Karen Gibb, Faculty of Education, Health and Science, Charles Darwin University on 08 8946 6705 or e-mail: karen.gibb@cdu.edu.au

Physics student gets to Bragg

Former Charles Darwin University student, Dr. Michael Bromley, has been awarded the Australian Institute of Physics’ 2003 Bragg Medal for the best PhD thesis from an Australian university.

Dr. Bromley’s award acknowledges his thesis, Positron-atom interactions studied using configuration interaction methods, completed at the University in 2002. Dr. Bromley is the first Northern Territory student to receive the award since its inception in 1992.

Chairman of the Bragg Medal Selection Committee, Professor Don Melrose, said that the overall quality and significance of Dr. Bromley’s work and its level of originality and intrinsic difficulty were key factors in the Committee’s decision.

“I was extremely fortunate to be able to research in Darwin under the guidance of Dr. Jim Mitroy,” said Dr Bromley.

“The additional support that we received from the University’s Research Committee enabled me to overcome the drawbacks of researching at a small, young but vibrant university.”

Dr. Bromley is currently working at Kansas State University as a Research Associate. His current research pursuits are in ‘atom chips’ - the trapping and manipulation of ultra cold clouds of atoms above microchip surfaces.
The creation of Charles Darwin University in late 2003 completed another chapter in the life of an extraordinary Territorian.

As Chancellor of the Northern Territory University, Nan Giese made a remarkable contribution to the former institution which was recognised at the recent Charles Darwin University graduation ceremony held 20 May where Mrs Giese was awarded the degree of Doctor of Education Honoris Causa.

Elected to the position of Chancellor in 1993, Mrs Giese continued her life-long commitment to improving education for all Territorians. She was notable for not only chairing the Council meetings but also attending every standing committee meeting. Nan also took a very active role in the University Art Collection Committee and the University’s Foundation.

Born Nancy Wilson in January 1922, Nan Giese was educated at Brisbane Girls Grammar School and the University of Queensland Teachers Training College.

Since completing her four-year bachelor’s degree in social work at Charles Darwin University, Toni Kapser has been working to improve the circumstances of others in the local community.

For the past six years, Ms Kapser has been working as a social worker and is currently the Greater Darwin Area Senior Social Worker for Centrelink.

Covering Darwin, Casuarina and Palmerston, Ms Kapser works with people in crisis, provides assessments for domestic violence issues and youth homelessness and involvement within the community. She also works with other staff in training, providing support for staff and management across many issues and offering a key access point for many agencies.

Ms Kapser said that her education at the University provided great grounding for her career.

“I was very fortunate to have been guided by some fantastic lecturers and tutors at the time who had a significant impact in the development of my identity as a social worker,” Ms Kapser said.

“The class size was also instrumental. There were about 12 graduates in my year, and because of the reasonably small numbers, we had the opportunity to receive a lot of ‘one to one’ guidance and support from our lecturers.

“I also had the opportunity to complete three work experience placements during the degree. This proved instrumental in linking the theoretical components of the degree with practical experience.”

Ms Kapser’s initial attraction to the field of social work and Centrelink as an employer was the variety of experience.

“The social work experience within Centrelink allows you to work with clients with a range of issues including domestic violence, mental health, homelessness, youth at risk and grief and loss. Often clients come to Centrelink as their first point of contact when dealing with a crisis. Offering social work intervention at this point is extremely important.”

Ms Kapser’s work has allowed her to work with clients from remote communities and reflect on the uniqueness of an individual’s experience characterised by distance.

“I previously spent three months travelling across Area North Australia to deliver training to newly appointed Customer Service Officers within Centrelink. I have also had the opportunity to be involved within the local community and contribute to many forums and meetings.

“There is a lot of scope in the field of social work and I look forward to pursuing further studies to progress my career in the near future,” Ms Kapser said.

Legends take time to arrive but Nan Giese has always been in the forefront. She has been a reliable and consistent light in the territory.

Support in trying times

Since completing her four-year bachelor’s degree in social work at Charles Darwin University, Toni Kapser has been working to improve the circumstances of others in the local community.

For the past six years, Ms Kapser has been working as a social worker and is currently the Greater Darwin Area Senior Social Worker for Centrelink.

Covering Darwin, Casuarina and Palmerston, Ms Kapser works with people in crisis, provides assessments for domestic violence issues and youth homelessness and involvement within the community. She also works with other staff in training, providing support for staff and management across many issues and offering a key access point for many agencies.

Ms Kapser said that her education at the University provided great grounding for her career.

“I was very fortunate to have been guided by some fantastic lecturers and tutors at the time who had a significant impact in the development of my identity as a social worker,” Ms Kapser said.

“The class size was also instrumental. There were about 12 graduates in my year, and because of the reasonably small numbers, we had the opportunity to receive a lot of ‘one to one’ guidance and support from our lecturers.

“I also had the opportunity to complete three work experience placements during the degree. This proved instrumental in linking the theoretical components of the degree with practical experience.”

Ms Kapser’s initial attraction to the field of social work and Centrelink as an employer was the variety of experience.

“The social work experience within Centrelink allows you to work with clients with a range of issues including domestic violence, mental health, homelessness, youth at risk and grief and loss. Often clients come to Centrelink as their first point of contact when dealing with a crisis. Offering social work intervention at this point is extremely important.”

Ms Kapser’s work has allowed her to work with clients from remote communities and reflect on the uniqueness of an individual’s experience characterised by distance.

“I previously spent three months travelling across Area North Australia to deliver training to newly appointed Customer Service Officers within Centrelink. I have also had the opportunity to be involved within the local community and contribute to many forums and meetings.

“There is a lot of scope in the field of social work and I look forward to pursuing further studies to progress my career in the near future,” Ms Kapser said.

Legends take time to arrive but Nan Giese has always been in the forefront. She has been a reliable and consistent light in the territory.
After graduation in 1936 she became a physical education teacher and was appointed to the ‘flying squad’ traversing Queensland, instructing primary school teachers how to teach physical education. She remained a physical education teacher with the Queensland Department of Education until 1946.

On 4 May 1946, she married Harry Giese, the inaugural director of Physical Education in Queensland who had appointed her to the ‘flying squad’. A year later she and her infant daughter Diana accompanied Harry to Canberra where he took up a new position.

In early 1955, changing location yet again, Nan, accompanied by her two children, Diana and Richard, travelled to Darwin to join Harry who had been appointed as Director of a newly established Welfare Branch. She found, to her dismay, that the house the family had been allocated on Myilly Point had no flywire on the kitchen windows and none of the bedrooms had overhead fans. She set about making the house a home.

Nan came to public prominence in 1968 when she became Vice President of the North Australian Eisteddfod Council, a post she held until 1972. Not content with one position, Nan was also a member of the Darwin Hospital Advisory Board from 1969 to 1973. She also served as Director of the Darwin Performing Arts Centre Board from 1981 to 1993, becoming a life member in 1993, and was President of the Northern Territory Arts Council for 10 years from 1971 during which time she was also a member of the Northern Territory Museums and Art Galleries Board.

Whilst serving as a member of the Northern Territory Post Schools Advisory Council, Nan was appointed to the Interim Planning Committee of the Darwin Community College in 1972. Prominent in getting the Community College back on its feet after Cyclone Tracy had badly damaged the facilities, Nan became Chairman of the College Council in 1976. She held this position until 1985, overseeing the change from the Darwin Community College to the Darwin Institute of Technology and the resulting furor over the change in name and alleged government interference in the institution.

After undertaking other roles in the arts and education, Nan Giese was appointed to the Interim Council of the Northern Territory University and was elected as Deputy Chancellor. She was elected Chancellor in February 1993 - a position she was to retain until the Northern Territory University became the Charles Darwin University ten years later.

In her role as Chancellor, Nan travelled both within the Territory and in South East Asia and China. Throughout her term as Chancellor, Nan continued her commitment to the arts in the Northern Territory as a life member of the Darwin Entertainment Centre and Darwin Chorale and a Friend of the Darwin Symphony Orchestra. She remains one of the Northern Territory’s most passionate advocates of local talent in both the visual and performing arts.

Nan Giese was awarded with the Membership of the British Empire (MBE) in 1971, which was superseded by the award of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1977. She was appointed an Officer in the Order of Australia (AO) in the Queen’s Birthday Honours list in 1997.

Since the death of her life partner Harry, Nan has taken on the role of custodian and caretaker of one of Darwin’s most important and magnificent tropical gardens. These gardens surround Nan’s home of 47 years, one of the few surviving National Trust homes at Myilly Point in Darwin. She recently credited the upkeep of her garden with keeping her fit at 81 years of age.

Nan Giese, a much-respected Territorian, epitomises an active, dynamic, contributing and caring Territorian who gave so much to the Northern Territory University and its predecessor institutions during their existence.
Ever seen snow in the desert?

Neither have we. Which is why we don’t teach Antarctic Survival at Charles Darwin. But we do understand our local environment and the unique needs of our local community. And we know how to make them come alive for our students.

For more information 1800 061 963 www.cdu.edu.au courses@cdu.edu.au