

» Giving breeds new hope for endangered animals

IT has been three years since zoologist Dr Marissa Parrott received a David Hay Writing Up Award. Although the award was made some time ago, she is still benefiting from its impact today – and so are the small endangered animals she is working to save.

DR Marissa Parrott's clients are an eclectic bunch – ranging from small and furry, feisty and "bitey" to long-armed and ancient. But there is one thing they all have in common – they are endangered mammals, whether Australian marsupials or orang-utans in Borneo. As a zoologist, Dr Parrott (BSc (Hons) 2001 PhD 2006) is undertaking research in a bid to save them from extinction.

Since completing her PhD in Zoology at the University of Melbourne in 2006, Dr Parrott has worked for Zoos Victoria and the University of Melbourne. Her role at Melbourne Zoo is focused on research for safely reintroducing captive-bred animals to the wild. At Healesville Sanctuary, she works with the world's only captive breeding program for the endangered Mountain Pygmy-possum, with her reproductive work assisting with the first successful breeding in the program in 2009.

Her work on reproduction is the basis for her post-doctoral research project with Stripe-faced Dunnarts at the University of Melbourne, which is a continuation of the research she undertook as a PhD student. Dr Parrott secured funding for this work after her PhD research was published in 2006, with the help of a David Hay Postgraduate Writing Up Award from The David Lachlan Hay Memorial Fund, of which the University of Melbourne is the trustee.

Dr Parrott says receiving the award helped to fast-track her career, by providing the financial support necessary to concentrate on writing up her research papers immediately after completing her PhD. "It allowed me that chunk of time to write up

my papers and get those published, which assisted me in securing more funding for my post-doc to continue my research into captive breeding of endangered animals," Dr Parrott says.

"This not only helped spread the importance of the mate-choice work I'm doing ... but it also gave me the ability to get my name out there so people knew to contact me for assistance with breeding."

Dr Parrott's breeding program is unique because it is based on "mate-choice" - allowing female marsupials to use their sense of smell to choose a mating partner. Using this method, Dr Parrott has doubled breeding success within the colony of Stripe-faced Dunnarts that she works with. She hopes this breeding method will help save the Mountain Pygmy-possum – and other endangered animals such as the Tasmanian Devil and Red-tailed Phascogale - from extinction.

Dr David Hay was a research scientist who left a bequest to the University to help postgraduate Science students publish their doctoral theses and related material, amongst other things. Dr Hay passed away in 1990, but the awards established by his bequest continue to have an impact on students' lives, year after year.

To find out more about the David Hay Postgraduate Writing Up Award, please visit www.science.unimelb.edu.au/scholarships.

» Dr Marissa Parrott cares for a baby orang-utan



» Annual gifts spread far & wide



GARY ISRAEL has donated to the University of Melbourne on an annual basis for nearly two decades, directing his support to where he believes it is most needed. This year he donated to climate change research, scholarships and the Faculty of Arts.

LIKE many Australians, Mr Israel (BA 1967) is gravely concerned about the impacts of climate change. Though he may not be a scientist or politician, Mr Israel has found something that he can do to help make a difference. After hearing a number of public lectures by Melbourne climate change expert Professor David Karoly, Mr Israel was inspired to donate money to climate change research at the University. "If everyone donated a bit to this area, I think it would make a difference," he says.

As a regular donor, Mr Israel's generosity has assisted a number of the University's goals and faculties. He has shown particular support for the Faculty of Arts, which lies close to his heart because it was where he completed his degree (on scholarship) and met his wife of 39 years, Margaret (nee Bremner) (BA 1967 BEd 1970 MEd 1976). Mr Israel went on to enjoy a long and rewarding career in education, as principal of Northcote High School for 20 years.

In 2004, Mr Israel joined the Committee of Convocation – the University's body of alumni representatives. It was then he became fully aware of the University's growing need for donor support and realised "the University needs much more to improve building stock, support research and provide scholarships."

"The library also needs more support and is a very worthy cause," he says. "Government can't do it all but does provide a nice tax deduction for giving."

A message to our donors

THE University is always grateful for the generous support of its donors, and particularly in difficult times. It is encouraging to our staff and students that the University receives your ongoing support despite the global economic challenges that have affected many in our community. We know that in choosing to support the University you are showing your belief in its research and education goals, and the capacity of our talented students.

So far, more than 2,000 alumni and friends of the University have donated to this year's Annual Appeal, and as we approach the end of the year, we are three quarters of the way to achieving our target of \$1 million, with over \$783,000 raised. My thanks to each of you for your support and generosity – your regular donations – no matter what size – make a real difference to our students, staff and University.

Yours sincerely, *Prof. Warren Bebbington, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (University Affairs)*

» Investing in global health



DR David Lindsay (MB BS 1977) regards donating as an investment in humanity.

FOR Dr Lindsay, his donations to local schools, hospitals and sports clubs are also investments in his local community. In recent years, Dr Lindsay has expanded the focus and reach of his donations to benefit those beyond Melbourne's borders. Since the foundation of the Nossal Institute for Global Health in 2007, Dr Lindsay has been a monthly donor and enthusiastic advocate of the Institute. "I thought this was a nice way to address health issues and support medical research and practice on an international basis," he says.

The Nossal Institute for Global Health, at the University of Melbourne, strives to address global health issues by boosting practice, learning and research in regions where public health needs are greatest, including South and South East Asia, the Mekong, Southern Africa and the Pacific. Dr Lindsay first learned of the Nossal's work when his close friend and fellow medical alumnus, Professor Rob Moodie (MB BS 1976), became the inaugural Chair of Global Health.

Though he admits his early donations stemmed from a desire to support

his friend, Dr Lindsay (pictured above right) with Prof. Moodie has become a strong believer in the Nossal's work and philosophy. "Around 90 percent of medical research funding is spent on problems facing 10 percent of people," Dr Lindsay says.

"The Nossal focuses on the health issues facing 90 percent of people, working on public health programs to reduce ill health and improve quality of existence. This appeals to me because the Nossal is dealing with health issues, many of which have existed for a long time in society and remain serious concerns."

Raised in a family where there was a strong culture of giving, Dr Lindsay believes it is important to support organisations and institutions that are making a positive difference in our immediate, broader and international communities.

"I'm a very lucky person – I have a wonderful family, I enjoy my job, and I live in a country that affords me a wealth of choice and opportunities," he says. "I enjoy supporting organisations such as Nossal, and always wish that I could do and give more."

To find out more about the Nossal Institute for Global Health, please visit www.ni.unimelb.edu.au/

»A grand encore for the Grainger



WHEN the freshly refurbished Grainger Museum re-opens its doors next year, it will have plenty of new stories to tell about the fascinating life of Australia's first major composer, Percy Grainger.

WITH six new galleries, a function room and new state-of-the-art display cabinets, the museum will now be able to exhibit twice as many artefacts from the historic Grainger collection, and will continue to educate Victorian school and university students, and the wider community, about the prolific composer and his contemporaries.

Generous donors who supported the University's Cultural Collections in the 2008 Annual Appeal have played an important role in helping the museum come back to life, after it was closed due to structural damage in 2003. The entire building has been refurbished, and more than \$30,000 raised in last year's Annual Appeal went towards transforming the museum's interior. With works nearing completion, the museum is scheduled to re-open in February 2010.

"We're really grateful for the support we received through last year's Appeal – it just goes to show how smaller contributions can add up to make a big difference."

Grainger Museum curators Astrid Krautschneider (BA (Hons) 1999 GCertArts (ArtHist) 2000 MArtCur 2004) and Brian Allison said the Appeal funds were used to purchase several large display cabinets that would ensure the precious artefacts would

» Curators Astrid Krautschneider, Brian Allison and assistant curator Monica Syrette examine an original Percy Grainger manuscript.

remain well protected and last longer while on display.

"Without this funding, we wouldn't have been able to display all the items in the cabinets and we wouldn't have been able to tell all the stories we want to tell," Ms Krautschneider said.

"We're really grateful for the support we received through last year's Appeal - it just goes to show how smaller contributions can add up to make a big difference."

Mr Allison said the museum, which first opened at the University of Melbourne in 1938, "re-evaluates a major cultural figure in Australian history". It was important to be able to share the many complex stories of Percy Grainger with the community.

"Percy Grainger was Australia's first internationally recognised composer... and he's been marginalised for reasons I can only say are tall poppy syndrome," Mr Allison said. "In the process of creating this auto-biographical museum, he didn't edit much out of his life. You get the whole story, including some pretty intimate details."

»Spirit of giving alive in tough times

WHILE households worldwide have felt the pinch this year, generous donors have continued to support students during these tough financial times.

Few have escaped the impacts of the global financial crisis, and low-income students are among those hit hard. With rental prices rising and casual work opportunities dramatically slashed, the University's Financial Aid Office has received more grant applications this semester than ever before.

In a bid to help students deal with those financial bumps in the road that could derail their studies, the University has named 'immediate support for students in financial need' as one of the highest priorities in the 2009 Annual Appeal. Those who have donated to the Appeal have already helped ease the pressure for many. In the first half of 2009, the University received more than \$243,000 to help students in immediate financial need. More than \$220,000 of this has already been used to provide housing grants for 220 students.

Roger Deutscher (BAgrSc 1981), Manager of the University's Student Financial Aid Office, said the ongoing donor support had been enormously helpful.

"Some students are forced to work three jobs – or even drop out – because they can't afford the basic cost of living," Mr Deutscher said. "A small amount of money to cover a shortfall can make a world of difference."

A student who received a postgraduate bursary this semester said it had enabled her to remain committed to her studies during a difficult time.

"It has really saved us, as the bills were piling up after I lost my job and it means I can get my textbooks before exams," she said.

Another wrote to the Student Financial Aid Office to express his gratitude for the housing grant and a \$500 postgraduate grant he received. "To me, this is a huge amount of money," he said.

To find out more about the Annual Appeal, please visit www.unimelb.edu.au/alumni/giving/

» Student volunteers get behind giving

STUDENTS not only benefit from philanthropy at the University of Melbourne – many also contribute.

THIS year more than 60 student volunteers have thrown their support behind two programs run by the University's Advancement Office – the Student Appeal and the Thank-a-thon.

The student-driven Appeal – which relies on the generosity of student donors – raised more than \$8,000 from August to October. This money will be used to provide Rent Assistance Grants for more than 16 students.

"There are 16 students that can breathe easier for a couple of weeks, who will now have the opportunity to get back on their feet, thanks to the help of the University community," Student Appeal volunteer Fer-lene Ooi said.

Fer-lene, who is studying bio-medicine, was on the team of volunteers that approached others on campus asking for donations.

"Getting students to donate to a fellow student is a challenging task – they only work part-time, if they work at all, and they have their own food, petrol, text books and Friday nights to pay for," she said.

"But I would get pleasantly surprised every time someone pulled out a \$20 to make a donation, because they see the Appeal is a worthy cause." The 2009 Student Appeal



has recently ended, but student volunteers continue to show their support through the University's Thank-a-thon. Over the past few months, more than 20 students have dedicated their spare time towards writing personal messages of thanks to those who have donated to the 2009 University Fund Appeal.

Volunteer Shalinda Kekulawala, a third-year medical student, said he liked the idea of handwriting messages to donors to show gratitude for their support.

"I think that they would really appreciate it, because not many people receive handwritten letters anymore," he said.

Commerce student Phillip Gao, who is a scholarship recipient, volunteered for the Thank-a-thon as a way of giving back to the University community.

"I feel an obligation to the university and the community because they've provided me with this opportunity."



» Above left: Thank-a-thon volunteers write letters of thanks to the University's donors. Front to back: Arvin Hartanto, Shalinda Kekulawala and Phillip Gao.

» Above right: Student Appeal volunteer Fer-lene Ooi

Chemical Engineering student Arvin Hartanto said many students relied on the generosity of donors, and he wanted to be part of saying thanks.

To find out more about the Student Appeal, visit www.unimelb.edu.au/giving/student/

» For more information about giving to the University:

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