



*The Governor-General, Ms Quentin Bryce AC with Walk On client Angel and therapist Alana (right)*

---

## LAUNCH OF LIFE-CHANGING WALK ON PROGRAM

The Governor-General, Ms Quentin Bryce AC officially launched the first NSW SCIA 'Walk On Program' at the Faculty of Health Sciences in 2010.

The Walk On program, which focuses on maximising functional recovery through exercise, is delivered by therapists at the Faculty of Health Sciences under a unique partnership arrangement with Spinal Cord Injuries Australia (SCIA). This program embeds community-based service delivery into teaching and research.

Dean of Health Sciences, Professor Gwynnyth Llewellyn said; "The partnership allows us to offer this vital service to the community while also introducing our students to cutting-edge exercise rehabilitation techniques and research.

Clients report that the Walk On exercises result in greater central nervous system activity, core strength, muscle mass and movement as well as improving their psychological and emotional health and wellbeing.

Based on the well-established US 'Project Walk', the Sydney program will be the first of its kind in NSW, following the successful introduction and pilot of the Walk On program in Brisbane two years ago.

With an estimated 360 Australians sustaining a spinal cord injury each year, the demand for services is high.



Professor Gwynnyth Llewellyn,  
Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences

## DEAN'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the first edition of our 'new look' Sydney Health Sciences newsletter. We know that our alumni and friends are busy people and we feel that this new format will allow us to bring you more regular snapshots of the outstanding achievements of our staff and students.

This is indeed a bumper edition following an exceedingly busy end to 2010. In November we were very pleased to welcome the Governor-General, Ms Quentin Bryce AC and the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney, Dr Michael Spence to Cumberland Campus for the official launch of the first NSW Walk On Program, a collaboration between Spinal Cord Injuries Australia and the Faculty of Health Sciences. Not long after this we enjoyed seeing many of our colleagues at the Launch of the Voice Research Laboratory and I'm pleased to announce that in June this year we will be officially opening another exciting research development, the new Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Research Laboratory.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the generous support received from alumni and friends in recent months which has lead to the establishment of new scholarship and prize opportunities for our students. It is support such as this that encourages them to reach their full potential. I look forward to our upcoming Awards Night at which time we can celebrate these achievements together.

## WALK ON AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY CONT.

NSW Therapist Kierre Ireland said clients had already travelled from as far as Western Australia and New Zealand to take part in the program.

"This isn't surprising as intensive exercise through the Walk On program provides an unprecedented opportunity for continued functional improvement post hospital rehabilitation," she said.

"Our clients range from young children to older adults and while not all of them will walk again, recovering the slightest movements can drastically improve the quality of life and independence of these individuals and have huge benefits for families."

Rod Watson is one such client. Whilst on his buck's afternoon with his mates, five weeks out from his wedding, Rod came off his trail bike and suffered a T12 complete spinal injury. He spent five months in hospital where he was taught everything he needed to know about accepting his future in a wheelchair. This was one of the hardest times for Rod who before his

accident was a welder by trade and self confessed sport enthusiast, racing motorcycles and drag cars.

Rod heard about Walk On in the hospital where he was doing rehab. He met a couple of people who had been and he knew he wanted to be a part of it. Earlier this year he attended Walk On for a 10 day program and was amazed by the results.

"For a paralysed person to improve in just 10 days, it was unbelievable," said Rod. "I gained more strength, more coordination and more core stability, and just felt more mentally positive about my future after Walk On. It gave me something to look forward to, it gave me hope."

For more information about the program please visit the Spinal Cord Injuries Australia website:

[scia.org.au/walk-on](http://scia.org.au/walk-on)



Centre: Dr Michael Spence, Vice Chancellor



Left: Ms Quentin Bryce AC, Governor-General of Australia

---

# ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW VOICE RESEARCH LABORATORY

The Faculty of Health Sciences cements its role as a leader in the area of voice research with the official opening of a new state-of-the-art laboratory.

According to speech pathologist and co-director of the laboratory Dr Cate Madill, research in this area is crucial as while voice is often taken for granted, is a vital part of who we are and what we do both at work and at play.

“Voice is such a diverse area and our research reflects this spanning across topics such as exploring the vocal characteristics of successful broadcasters, to investigating techniques to save the voice after vocal cord cancer, or to prevent voice problems in at-risk populations like teachers.”

These research endeavours will be supported by the Laboratory's recent acquisition of the first High

Speed Laryngoscopy Unit (HSV) of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere. This pioneering equipment allows researchers to view and capture the vocal cords moving in real time, at the speed of over 4000 frames per second.

“As the vocal cords are the only muscles that hit each other in the body, they are vulnerable to damage from excessive talking, yelling, illness and fatigue.”

“The HSV for the first time allows us to observe how the vocal cords recover after being damaged by excessive use or surgical procedures,” says Dr Madill.

The outcomes of this work will have broad reaching implications for numerous professions and hobbyists in fields like singing, radio, journalism, the performing arts, teaching and telemarketing. For example, voice

injury in teachers alone is estimated to cost over \$60 million per year and is documented as impacting negatively on student learning. However recent research led by Dr Madill has also proven the relevance of voice research to all individuals in their daily interactions by impacting upon the ways in which we relate to one another.

The Voice Research Laboratory brings together nationally and internationally renowned voice scientists, speech pathologists and ear nose and throat specialists including the University of Hong Kong's Professor Edwin Yiu and Dr Carsten Palme of Westmead Hospital.

For further information contact:  
Dr Cate Madill  
P: +61 2 9351 9692  
E: [cate.madill@sydney.edu.au](mailto:cate.madill@sydney.edu.au)



Centre: Dr Cate Madill talks the audience through a live demonstration of the High Speed Laryngoscopy Unit



“A key motivation was knowing that the completion of the study would be a very significant achievement for my family, and for Aboriginal people in general.”

**DR REUBEN BOLT**  
PHD GRADUATE  
FACULTY OF HEALTH  
SCIENCES

Right to Left: Professor Gavin Mooney, Professor Gwynnyth Llewellyn, Dr Reuben Bolt, Professor Chris Cunningham

## FIRST INDIGENOUS PHD GRADUATE FOR HEALTH SCIENCES

Dr Reuben Bolt recently became the first Indigenous Australian student to graduate with a doctorate degree from the Faculty of Health Sciences.

Reuben’s research into Aboriginal identity is set to deepen the way Indigenous people are understood in Australia and the rest of the world.

The aim of Dr Bolt’s PhD thesis is to better understand the process of the construction of Aboriginal identity, particularly in urban communities.

Bolt, who comes from the Shoalhaven area where his study took place, imbued his qualitative research with personal experience and an insider’s view, which shaped the design and development of his proposal, the recruitment of participants, and the final analysis of the data.

“I had become interested in the topic of Aboriginal identity during my early teens when I experienced identity-questioning episodes,” Bolt says.

“Ultimately, I questioned my sense of ‘authentic’ Aboriginal identity. I later came to understand that the romantic version of Aboriginality - the so-called ‘true’ Aborigine - was a key influence in these identity-questioning episodes.”

Bolt’s family joined him in the Great Hall for the proud occasion of his graduation - his wife, three-year-old

daughter, newborn son, both parents, his aunt, two sisters and his 82-year-old grandmother.

Bolt says that breaking the culture of non-academic achievement in his family was a strong motivating factor behind his work.

“The political climate [of the 40s, 50s and 60s] made it very difficult for Aboriginal people to become educated, effectively resulting in my mother and her siblings not finishing their intermediate schooling education. To break this cycle I decided to finish my Higher School certificate. I did that in 1994. At that time it was a major goal, especially given that I wanted to be the first grandson to complete the HSC (out of about 40 grandchildren).

“In 1998 my father asked if I would be interested in studying at university. Initially I said no. After he had asked many times, I decided to go to uni to ‘try it out’. Now, almost 12 years later, I have a BHS with Honours, a Masters degree and a PhD.

# THREE NEW POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIPS

New scholarships for postgraduate research will enable our best and brightest health sciences students to pursue pioneering research.

## MARY STEPHENS SCHOLARSHIP IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

In August 2010 faculty executive joined current and recently graduated researchers and Mary's friends and family, her sister Jan Morgan and niece Julie Ayliffe, to launch a new scholarship generously funded from the estate of Mary Stephens - a leader in occupational therapy in Australia. Mary was well known as a pioneer in the field in Australia during the 1950's and 60's.

## DEIDRE RUSSELL MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship was established under a bequest from the late Mr Jack Russell in honour of his wife Deidre. Deidre Russell devoted 35 years of her life to helping patients with language disorders and to teaching in the field of speech pathology. Deidre is seen as a pioneer in the profession and is fondly remembered by many for her years as a teacher and colleague at the then Cumberland College of Health Sciences during the 1990's. It will be awarded for the first time in 2011.

## SPINAL CORD INJURIES AND SPINALCURE AUSTRALIA SCHOLARSHIP

Sponsored by Spinal Cord Injuries Australia, as part of our new Walk On program, this scholarship will allow a PhD candidate to undertake investigation of the physiological and psychosocial benefits of the Walk On program. This will encompass assessment of functional improvements, altered general health, improved quality of life and identification of any associated health economic benefits of the program.

**Support from our alumni and friends provides opportunities for our best and brightest students, and supports their research endeavors within the faculty.**

If you are interested in making a donation or leaving a bequest please visit: [sydney.edu.au/supportsydney](http://sydney.edu.au/supportsydney)

# ALUMNI UPDATES

## MICHELLE JANSEN

The Health Sciences Alumni Association welcomes **Michelle Jansen BAppSc (MRS) '10** as a new representative for Health Sciences' alumni on the University's Alumni Council.

## COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Diagnostic radiography student **Prashanth Sellathurai** was part of the Australian men's artistic gymnastics team which won its first ever Commonwealth Games' gold.

Master's student **Alexandra Croak BHlthSc(OT) '10** achieved outstanding success in Delhi winning gold in the women's diving synchronised 10 metre platform.

## 2011 DIARY DATES

### TUESDAY 12 APRIL

WESTERN NSW ALUMNI RECEPTION

### WEDNESDAY 4 MAY

HEALTH SCIENCES AWARDS NIGHT

### TUESDAY 10 MAY

GRADUATE CONNECTIONS BREAKFAST, SPEAKER LUCY TURNBULL AO

### WEDNESDAY 1 JUNE

CANBERRA ALUMNI RECEPTION

### TUESDAY 19 JULY

HEALTH SCIENCES ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

For further alumni events held throughout the year please visit: [sydney.edu.au/alumni](http://sydney.edu.au/alumni)

The Faculty of Health Sciences Alumni Awards honour activities and service which often go unrecognised within the wider community.

If you know any Sydney graduates who have made outstanding contributions to society please take this opportunity to recognise their achievements.

**Nominations are open until March 31.**

To nominate, head to [sydney.edu.au/health\\_sciences/alumni/awards](http://sydney.edu.au/health_sciences/alumni/awards)

If you require further information, please contact our Alumni Relations Officer.

P 61 2 9036 7487

E [karina.quinlan@sydney.edu.au](mailto:karina.quinlan@sydney.edu.au)

## ALUMNI AWARDS '11

CELEBRATING THE OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS OF ALUMNI





Professor Yu Jiakuo and Professor Kathryn Refshauge co-chairing the symposium section on 'The Knee'.

# SINO-AUSTRALIAN SYMPOSIUM

Delegates from Peking University and the University of Sydney recently came together in Beijing for the first Sino-Australian Symposium on Sports and Rehabilitation Science.

The event, held at the Peking University Health Science Centre on December 16 and 17, allowed academics from the University of Sydney's Faculty of Health Sciences and Sydney Medical School to join Peking University's Sports Medicine Institute to share expertise in the area of sports medicine and rehabilitation research.

"The symposium allowed both parties to gain an understanding of each other's research strengths in the area of sports medicine and to identify mutual research and educational interests that may prove fruitful collaborations in the future," commented Professor Patrick Brennan, Associate Dean of International Research Development at the Faculty of Health Sciences.

Among the many possibilities for future collaborations, the application of technology to sports rehabilitation was highlighted as a priority area, as was need for the quantification of sports injuries. The potential to utilise the vast number of possible participants in China for large-scale research projects was also raised.

'In terms of technological advancement there was a great deal of discussion around the use of computer visualisation in the assessment and treatment of sporting injuries and we are eager to further pursue this area with our Chinese colleagues,' said Professor Brennan. "We hope to harness the enthusiasm of this meeting and look forward to the prospect of a second Sino-Australian Symposium taking place in Sydney towards the end of 2011."

The Symposium was sponsored by the Australia-China Council of DFAT.

## YOUR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

### HEALTH SCIENCES ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

There are currently vacancies in the Health Sciences Alumni Association (HSAA) Executive Committee.

If you are interested in helping to develop your alumni association, and have a few evenings free a year to volunteer, please contact our Health Sciences Alumni Officer for more information.

### COMMITTEE MEETINGS DATES FOR 2011

April 19  
July 19 - AGM  
September 20  
December 13

5:30pm, Conference Room  
Jeffrey Miller Building (A Block)  
Cumberland Campus  
75 East Street  
Lidcombe NSW 2141  
The University of Sydney

FACULTY OF  
HEALTH SCIENCES



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Health Sciences Alumni Office  
T +61 2 9036 7487  
F +61 2 9036 7367  
E [supportfhs@sydney.edu.au](mailto:supportfhs@sydney.edu.au)  
[sydney.edu.au/health\\_sciences](http://sydney.edu.au/health_sciences)