1. Education

*Opening of the new UWA Business School building*

On 3 May 2009, the new home of the UWA Business School was officially opened by the Premier, Colin Barnett before an audience comprising the leaders of the State’s business community and donors to the UWA Business School campaign.

Business education in Western Australia will take a significant step forward with the opening of the new environmentally-sustainable building.

Following the official opening, the UWA Business School was opened to the public with an extensive program of events including a performance by the West Australian Symphony Orchestra.

*High school students visit UWA to learn about the SKA*

More than 500 science students from around the State will receive a privileged, behind-the-scenes introduction to the SKA project through the *Out There!* Exhibition held at The University of Western Australia from Monday 4 May to Friday 15 May.

The name of the exhibition, *Out There!,* refers to the WA outback as well as to outer space. The event is a collaboration between UWA’s Faculty of Life and Physical Sciences, the new International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research (ICRAR - a partnership between UWA and Curtin University of Technology), the UWA Spice program (secondary teachers’ enrichment program) and Scitech.

*Out There!* will feature an operational radio telescope, scale models of the SKA, a timeline ribbon highlighting what we can see now in space and how the SKA will enable astronomers to ‘look back in time’ as well as Scitech’s new portable Spacedome and a ‘World at Night’ astrophotography show.
2. Research and Research Training

**UWA researchers win US grant for muscular dystrophy study**

UWA researchers have been awarded more than $1.2 million in US funding for research into the treatment of the devastating muscle-wasting disease Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD).

UWA molecular biologist Steve Wilton and his UWA colleague, Sue Fletcher, received the funding through the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

NIH funding is extremely competitive, especially for research based outside the US.

DMD is a relentlessly progressive and incurable muscle wasting disorder, and one of the most common serious genetic disorders to affect children around the world. Each year, at least three boys born in Perth will have the disease.

Professor Dame Kay Davies, a world expert on DMD and Professor of Anatomy at the University of Oxford, has described Professor Wilton's research as “the most important work into a treatment for DMD in the world at the moment”.

The NIH grant, which includes more than $314,000 per year over four years, follows UWA's signing of an exclusive worldwide licence agreement with US-based biopharmaceutical company AVI BioPharma in November last year to a patent related to the treatment of DMD.

According to its website, the NIH looks for unique projects of high scientific calibre that are relevant to public health needs. NIH funds support the advancement of fundamental knowledge about the nature and behaviour of living systems, to extend a healthy life, and reducing the burdens of illness and disability.

Professors Wilton and Fletcher's work on the innovative use of antisense technology to restore dystrophin expression in Duchenne muscular dystrophy was showcased in the December 5, 2008 edition of the prestigious international journal Science.

**UWA receives grants from Australia-India Strategic Research Fund**

On 17 April the grants awarded from the *Australia-India Strategic Research Fund* were announced by Senator Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research.

The Fund encourages the best scientists from India and Australia to collaborate and fosters the already close relation between the two countries.

UWA was awarded two grants out of the Fund. One worth $385,000 is a project with the Indian Institute of Science concerning all-optical actuation and interrogation of MEMS and NEMS resonant mode sensors. The other grant is to help establish Australian-Indian collaboration on gravitational wave astronomy. It is a joint project with UWA and Raman Research Institute and was awarded $33,000.

**UWA and AIMS enter into Marine Science Agreement**

On 26 March 2009, Federal Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator Kim Carr, welcomed a new era in research co-operation with the signing at The University of Western Australia of a $2 million marine science agreement.

The University of Western Australia and the Australian Institute of Marine Science signed a memorandum of understanding to establish a joint research fund for marine science.
Under the agreement, worth more than $2 million over five years, UWA and AIMS will share resources to support research fellows and a pool of PhD students focused on important marine science issues.

AIMS is a publicly funded research agency internationally recognised for its research on tropical marine ecosystems.

In his speech at UWA, Senator Carr highlighted UWA’s clear understanding of the importance of Western Australian ocean research to the prosperity of the State, and recognised UWA’s excellent performance. Quoting from Senator Carr’s speech:

"The University of Western Australia has an outstanding reputation in marine science and ocean engineering and it is ranked number one in oceanography among Australian Universities."

Zadco Telescope launched at UWA

The State's biggest telescope was launched by Australia's Chief Scientist, Professor Penny Sackett, at The University of Western Australia on Wednesday April 1.

Co-located with the Gravity Discovery Centre near Gingin, north of Perth, the telescope is part of a global network of telescopes linked to a NASA satellite ground station. It will search for massive cosmic explosions known as gamma ray bursts which herald the formation of black holes at the edge of the known universe.

The Zadko telescope’s unique geographical position makes it a vital global facility for the study of the transient universe, allowing it to explore a huge section of uncharted and previously unmonitored space.

The Zadko telescope will also be involved in joint international projects such as searching for potentially hazardous near-earth asteroids and tracing dangerous space junk while helping scientists learn about the formation of our own planet. It has already detected one of the biggest explosions in the universe which occurred more than 11 billion years ago (before the earth was formed), resulting in the death of a star.

On behalf of the University, I acknowledge the generosity of Jim Zadko, Chief Executive Officer of Claire Energy, for his gift of the Zadko telescope to the people of Western Australia.

The Zadko telescope joins other exciting astronomy projects in this State, including the International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research in partnership with Curtin University of Technology; and the Australian International Gravitational Observatory in Gingin.

3. People and Resources

UWA support of Earth Hour

The University of Western Australia supported the third annual Earth Hour commencing at 8.30pm on 28 March.

Staff and students were asked to participate by turning off all non-essential lighting and stand-by power sources before leaving the University premises on Friday evening.

The floodlighting on one of Perth’s most recognisable buildings, UWA's Winthrop Hall, was also turned off.
Reducing energy consumption is a key objective of the University and we are very pleased to take part. Earth Hour started in Sydney in 2007 with 2.2 million homes and businesses turning off lights for an hour.

4. External Relations and Community Engagements

*Len Zuks wins people's choice award at Sculpture by the Sea exhibition*

Acclaimed West Australian artist and UWA staff member, Len Zuks has won the People's Choice Prize at this year's Sculpture by the Sea exhibition at Cottesloe Beach.

Mr Zuks, who works as a fitter in the UWA Facilities Management maintenance workshop, won the award for his steel and rubber sculpture, 'Antipodean Recruits', which depicts five emus in close company.

His work is one of more than 60 sculptures from Australia and overseas, including 36 Western Australian artists, selected for this year's beachside show.

Mr Zuks has won several awards and created a number of fabricated steel sculptures for public art commissions including works at Ascot Waters, Melville, Boddington and Karratha Airport. He was awarded a Chancellor's Medal at a Graduation Ceremony at UWA in autumn 2009 for his outstanding contribution to the University over many years.

Alan Robson

Vice-Chancellor