



From the President

I am honored to have been elected as your President over the next two years and this honor is further enhanced with involvement in the upcoming 50th

Churchill Trust anniversary celebrations.

The Churchill Fellows Association Committee members across Australia are well known for their commitment and enthusiasm and this is especially true for the Victorian members. I would particularly like to acknowledge Janine Barrand's exceptional leadership and guidance during her stewardship as President. Under Janine's leadership we observed a move into the present with a number of terrific branding and design features for the CFAV. This included new identity colors, branding templates and promotional banners. We also participated in the development of a strategic plan for the CFAV, which was approved by the committee and sets a very clear direction for the CFAV in future years. Janine's expertise will not be lost, as Janine has agreed to continue on the committee and share her wealth of skills and experience.

Over my term as President I am especially keen to embrace the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the Churchill Trust, which will commence in mid 2015 and continue through until mid 2016. The Presidents of all Churchill Associations across Australia met at Churchill House Canberra on the 12 and 13 November 2013 to discuss and commence planning for those celebrations. It was a privilege to be involved in such an important and momentous workshop and in the next few months, I will commence consultation with all Victorian fellows in relation to possible activities within Victoria.

The central celebration for the 50th anniversary is the



February 2014

Churchill Fellows National Convention, which will be held in Sydney from Friday 9th October 2015 until Sunday 11th October 2015. I can assure fellows that this national conference is not to be missed and encourage all fellows to consider attending this special celebration.

It would be impossible for the Association to achieve the outstanding outcomes achieved over the previous years without a significant commitment from the dedicated members of the committee. My special thanks go to Julie Rees, Shane Ringin, Dean Cox, Ben Nicholson, Jenny Dwyer, Haig Burnell, Anne Hooker, Andrew Nixon and Joh Kirby.

The Association would also like to acknowledge the dedication displayed by committee members who are stepping down, which includes Lou Chamberlin, Jen O'Brien and Daphne Cheah, who is on leave of absence.

Regards

Murray Ashby
President, CFAV

KEY DATES — 2014

9 May - Medallion Dinner

1 Aug - New Fellows Dinner &
AGM

2 Aug - New Fellows Workshop

Outgoing President's Report

It has been a pleasure to be the President of the Association for the past two years and to hand over to incoming President Murray Ashby. During my term as President I have been assisted by a wonderful group of individuals on the Committee each bringing a wealth of experience.

I am particularly pleased that we have developed ways in which to involve members of the Association by introducing a register of Fellows interested in assisting us. Many have offered to host workplace visits, and support our events by welcoming guests and acting as table hosts. Others have offered assistance with online and membership development and involvement in the forthcoming fiftieth anniversary of Churchill in 2015 currently being masterminded by the Trust. The vast majority have said 'happy to assist with anything'. At the time of going to press 35 Fellows representing 44 years of Churchill history have joined the Register. I encourage you do put yourself forward too!

Our Annual Dinner and AGM was held on July 26 and continues to be our 'night of nights' welcoming as it does a new group of Fellows to all that Churchill has to offer. Twenty three Fellows were awarded in Victoria reflecting again the Victorian Regional Committee and Trust's insights into the major issues and challenges of the day with Fellows exploring topics such as homelessness, food security, dementia and contemporary artistic and digital practices.

This event marks a turning point in the year for the Association with departures and arrivals from the Committee as it continues to renew and refresh for the future. A significant departure was that of Lou Chamberlin who joined the Committee in 1995 later becoming President. Lou brought energy and passion to her role and is known to work at all hours with emails dispatched to me as then Secretary in the *very very* early morning! I was so pleased to acknowledge Lou as a Life Time Member of the Association.

We also said farewell to Jenny O'Brien who has



been the most fabulous Secretary over the past two years. There were also warm welcomes to new members of the Committee who are Anne Hooker, Joh Kirby and Andrew Nixon.

As this is my final message to you as President, I would like to acknowledge the support of Paul Tys and the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust who provide assistance with marketing and promotion of our work. The Victorian Regional Committee led by Linda Dessau continues to support the Association by enabling the President of the Association to participate as a voting member on the Final Selection Panel for which we are grateful.

Finally to my colleagues whom I thank so much: Past President Shane Ringin who almost single handedly organizes our major events, Dean Cox who has so successfully convened the New Fellows Workshop, Julie Rees continues to host our meetings; and all the other members – Murray Ashby, Jenny Dwyer, Daphne Cheah, Ben Nicolson and Haig Burnell. It's been great!

Janine Barrand
Past President

**Churchill Fellows'
50th NATIONAL CONVENTION
Sydney
9—11 October 2015**

2013 Churchill Fellows Congratulations



Lucinda	Adams	Senior Lawyer, Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic	Public Interest Law Clearing House (Vic) Inc	To address the negative impact of laws regulating public space on people experiencing homelessness - USA, Canada, Belgium, Switzerland, UK
Duncan	Ashby	Consultant	R.G Ashby & Co. Pty Ltd	To determine how Australian farm succession and productivity can be improved through enhanced leasing practices - UK, USA, Canada
Narelle	Beer	Acting Superintendent of Police	Victoria Police	To undertake specialised training in the development and execution of integrity testing in policing - USA, UK
Timothy	Bignell	Blacksmith	The Sovereign Hill Museums Association	To obtain advanced skills and knowledge in traditional blacksmithing practices through international exposure - Italy, France, UK, Ireland
Soren	Blau	Senior Forensic Anthropologist	Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine	The Sir William Kilpatrick Churchill Fellowship to study technical aspects of analysis and interpretation of skeletal trauma in medico-legal investigations - Peru, USA

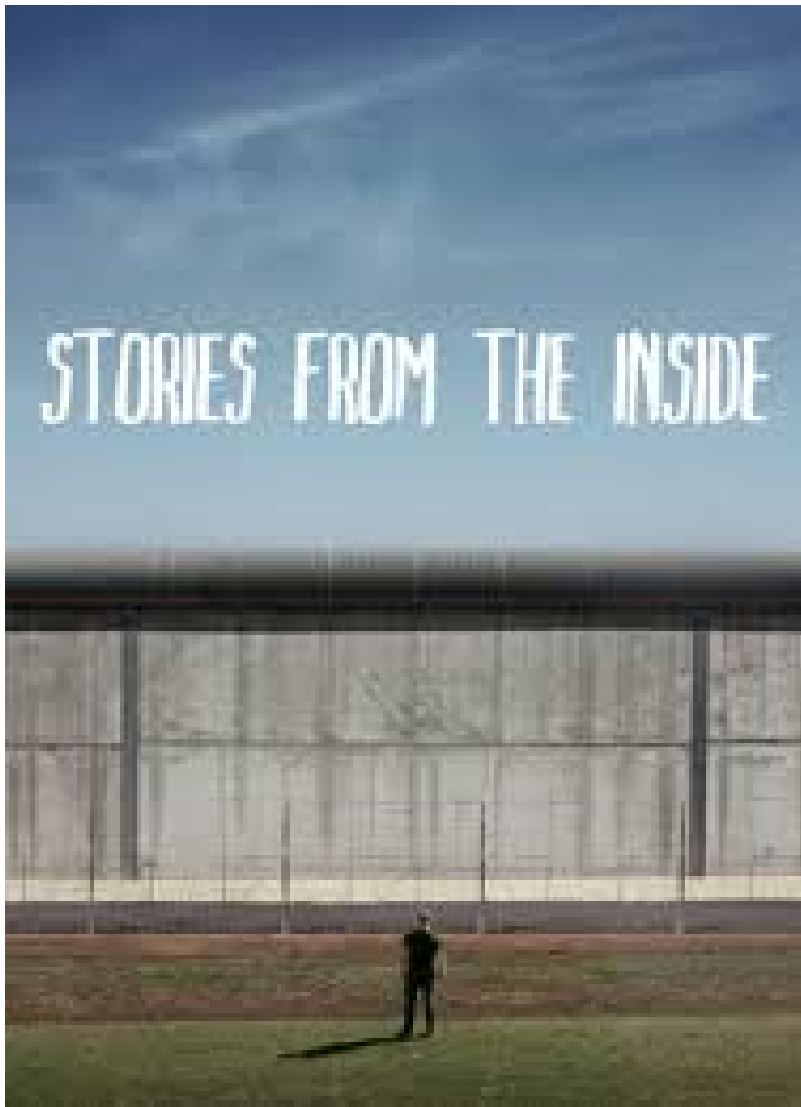
2013 Churchill Fellows Congratulations

Megan	Cardamone	Koae Ngeeye (our Stories) Project Manager	Koorie Heritage Trust	To undertake a study tour of Indigenous (Native) digital museum and heritage projects - USA
Lauren	Caulfield	Self-employed Trainer/ Facilitator (gender violence prevention) Consultant		To research community-based safety projects and strategies to combat gender violence - USA
Dane	Cody	Sound Recordist	Fremantle Media / Neighbours (television series production)	To study the latest technology and techniques in location sound recording - USA, UK, Ireland, New Zealand
Mark	Collins	National Manager, Honda Australia RoadCraft Training	Honda Australia	To improve motorcycle rider safety by updating training methods and curricula in Australia - Japan, UK, Netherlands, Austria, USA
Luke	Cornish	Self-employed Artist		To establish an international recognition of Australian stencil art through networking and collaborating with highly successful artists - UK, France, USA
Ian	de Cruz	Policy and Strategy Manager	Department of Primary Industries	To find new ways to build international cooperation around climate change where Australia can continue to play a constructive proactive role - China, Philippines, Indonesia, Poland, UK, Belgium, USA, Chile
Marilyn	Di Stefano	Occupational Therapy Consultant and Practitioner/ Senior Lecturer	Self-employed/La Trobe University	The Jack Brockhoff Foundation Churchill Fellowship to examine advances in vehicle technology/rehabilitation applications to enable independence for drivers with disabilities - UK, Sweden, USA
Linda	Gyorki	Project Manager and Solicitor	North Melbourne Legal Service	To research the ethical and practical barriers of integrating legal assistance into a health-care setting - Canada, USA, UK
Michelle	Harvey	Senior Lecturer in Forensic Science	Deakin University	To describe the bacterial fauna associated with the blowfly <i>Lucilia sericata</i> in flystrike, carrion breeding and natural situations - USA

2013 Churchill Fellows

Congratulations

Christopher	Mercier	Ranger in Charge	Parks Victoria	To investigate the use of new technology for use by Australian Park Rangers in park and natural resource protection - USA, Indonesia, Mozambique, South Africa, Nepal
Matthew	Pfahlert	Principal	Social Enterprise Unlimited	To study social enterprise incubators/ accelerators as a tool for rural and regional renewal - USA, Canada, UK
Gary	Ryan	Manager Safety and Security	Department of Justice, Courts and Tribunals Service	To investigate strategies and techniques relating to intelligence led court security - UK, Ireland, Netherlands, Canada, USA
Russell	Shields	Head of Program Development	SecondBite	To investigate international models of food rescue and community food initiatives that address food security for vulnerable populations - Canada, USA,
Nataliya	Shkuratova	Senior Neurological Physiotherapist	Epworth Health Care	The Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation Churchill Fellowship to discover new ways to develop and deliver multidisciplinary falls prevention intervention that can effectively protect older Australians from falls after discharge from hospital - UK, Netherland
Fiona	Smith	Policy and Research Advisor	Trust for Nature, Victoria	To investigate innovative market based approaches for stimulating biodiversity conservation efforts on private land - USA, Canada, UK
Efterpi	Soropos	Artist in Residence	Southern Health	To investigate, develop and implement aged care dementia immersive sensory art projects - Hong Kong, Japan, UK
Julie	Whitfield	Biodiversity Officer	Department of Sustainability and Environment/Self-employed	To obtain information and direction from leading experts in butterfly conservation and community engagement - USA, UK
Erica	Wood	Head, Transfusion Research Unit	Monash University	The Jack Brockhoff Foundation Churchill Fellowship to establish a collaborative clinical research program in patient blood management - USA, UK



Workplace Visit

Stories from the Inside

A documentary directed, filmed and edited by the inmates of the Youth Unit, Port Phillip Prison

they committed and acknowledge the impacts of these crimes on the victims and their loved ones.

These powerful stories are told in the hope that our impressionable and sometimes easily led youth will take time to consider the consequences their actions may have on them, their families, friends and other people in the community.

The film called "Stories from the Inside" is also a hard-hitting real life view of what prison life is like for these young men. The film and other supporting material will be available for all secondary schools shortly and if it deters one person from committing serious harm to others or themselves, then the young men of Port Phillip Prison Youth Unit should be commended.

CFAV Workplace Visit 11/10/2013

Report: Dean Cox and Ben Nicholson

Venue: Youth Unit, Port Phillip Prison

Organiser: Anne Hooker, Youth Development Officer and Churchill Fellow (2007) - To investigate programs for young male prisoners - Netherlands, U.K., Canada, USA

This was a day that started out with a certain amount of fear and uncertainty but as it unfolded it gave a very different appreciation of all involved in this environment. From driving towards the prison and seeing the walls that hide a lot of the aspects of prison to being totally engaged by what the staff and prisoners produced. Let's set the scene.

We were invited to the launch of a film made by the inmates of the Youth Unit at Port Phillip Prison. These inmates range from the age of eighteen to early twenties and have been sent to prison for a variety of crimes for which many are serving a long sentence.

Showing great respect to the victims of their crimes, the young men have made a collective approach to deter other young people from making the same mistakes that they have. They found real courage to be able to talk about the crimes

To our Churchill Fellow, Anne, you have not only exposed us to what a great job you do with the Youth Unit at Port Phillip Prison, but also how a Churchill Fellowship can deliver in so many different ways.

For more information, visit:

<http://storiesfromtheinside.com.au/>

<http://www.servingtime.org/>



The empowered patient:

Encouraging the sick to be keen observers can help hospitals avoid errors, writes **Julia Medew**.

RIGHT: Dr Catherine Crock: 2009 Fellow: Patient-centred healthcare and its impact on patient safety.

DOCTOR Catherine Crock knows better than most that hospitals can be dangerous places. The leading physician has seen her fair share of medical errors in a 31-year career, including some she has made and learnt from. When Crock was admitted to hospital recently for a small procedure, she couldn't help focusing on routine safety measures such as staff washing their hands between patients, checking identification tags before taking blood, and keeping medical histories up to date so crucial changes are detected in a timely fashion.

TO her dismay, lapses in these checks and balances were happening around her. "Some of these things weren't being done, and at one stage I even saw a mix-up with two patients' histories. I kept noticing things in the area I was sitting and I thought, 'Should I mention it to them or not?' It made me nervous about my safety," she said. Crock was also worried about signs of tension between staff whizzing through their work to get to the next patient needing attention. Having worked in teams, she knew how crucial collaboration was for safe and efficient care, so even minor bickering among the staff bothered her. "It's a bit like watching people [working] in a restaurant. If they're fighting, you start wondering if the coffee's going to be cold," she said. "How can you trust them if their house is not in order?"

THE coffee example may seem slight, but the restaurant analogy is appropriate, given the common fear that you will be punished for sending back an unsatisfactory order. Complaining about minor medical mistakes may seem similarly fraught, but the consequences of such disharmony in the health system can be dire. Every year, at least one in 10 Australian patients will experience an adverse event in hospital – unwanted and usually harmful incidents that must be acknowledged if staff are to prevent them from happening again. Extreme incidents that have been widely reported include surgeons operating on the wrong body part, or a pregnant woman having disinfectant accidentally injected into her spine instead of an epidural. Hundreds of thousands of others receive no publicity, such as a prescription error that resulted in a child receiving chemotherapy eight months longer than they should have, or an elderly person who picked up a life-threatening infection from a bed sore that would never have happened with more thorough care. The most common cause of these errors is a breakdown in communication between patients and staff, or among staff themselves during clinical handovers, of which there are millions every year during shift changes.

ACCORDING to the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare, about half of all medication errors occur during these



transitions in care. The possibilities are endless and often so subtle that they would be untraceable if someone tried to work out where things went wrong. A hurried conversation, for example, might make a patient skip over some crucial details when a

doctor asks about their symptoms to make a diagnosis. While hospitals are already using many proven methods such as checklists and peer reviews to prevent errors, there is a growing feeling in the health sector that patients can and should play more of a role in their care to prevent mishaps.

CROCK, who has worked in adolescent health and haematology at the Royal Children's Hospital for many years and who also directs the Australian Institute for Patient and Family Centred Care, says an increasing number of hospitals around the world are preventing errors by empowering patients and their families to participate more. Some are inviting patients to check their medications, for example, or have their family members measure their temperature or how much water they are drinking to ensure it is being done. Others are telling patients to ask their carers if they have washed their hands before they touch them. There has also been a move to put patient representatives on hospital committees, including those that make decisions about health professional job applicants. After all, Crock says, patients and their families are well placed to see things that work and don't work.

WHILE hospital staff are usually thinking about dozens of patients at the same time, as well as their colleagues and what is happening in their private life, patients and their families are sitting around for hours on end noticing look-alike medication bottles and inconsistent advice from different doctors. "The patient and family are the constant across all changes of care and location within the system. Collectively, they are a significant resource of valuable information that the healthcare system needs to tap into," she says.

ONE hospital that has achieved results from mobilising patients is the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in the US. A few years back, staff decided to encourage patients to cross-check their care more often and speak up if they noticed anything wrong. A campaign was run with the slogan "Check, Ask, Notify" on posters to remind people to participate. When staff surveyed more than 2000 patients about their experience, they found a strong link between active participation and fewer adverse events. The survey asked patients about their illness, how often they spoke with doctors and nurses about it, whether they had relatives or a friend to help them make decisions and express their wishes, and if they ever checked things such as the medication they were being given. When the researchers looked at their medical records, they found that patients who scored highly on these measures had half the rate of adverse events in hospital compared with others.

VICTORIA's Health Services Commissioner, Beth Wilson, has seen many cases where patients or their families may have been able to prevent problems in the health system. She often hears about

incidents where people saw missed opportunities. “I’ve heard people say, ‘I knew my baby was sick, I just knew it’ after something has gone horribly wrong. It’s powerful stuff. In some cases they felt afraid to speak up or they did speak up and were ignored.” Wilson says most people feel disempowered by a paternalistic culture in hospitals and clinics where doctors have always known best. There are visible hierarchies everywhere. Surgeons and senior medical specialists boss junior doctors around, who in turn tell nurses and administrative staff what to do.

WILSON says the culture not only makes people scared to speak up out of fear that they will offend or embarrass someone, but they also think they might be punished for it or get someone sacked. “I frequently see people telling me about an incident but not wanting to make a complaint because they don’t want to get people into trouble,” she said. “We need to change the culture, and culture is often created by the language that is used. I’ve noticed that some healthcare workers are now being told not to call patients names like ‘sweetie,’ ‘dear’ or ‘mate’. I’m sympathetic to that because I don’t want someone calling me ‘sweetie’ while they put a suppository in me. If you’re calling someone ‘sweetie’ or ‘dear’, you’re talking down to them.

HEALTH professionals need to think carefully about the way they communicate with people. It needs to be respectful.” Wilson says the paternalistic culture is also undermining the law of informed consent, which says people should be told as much as is necessary for them to be able to make an informed choice about their care. “It does not happen anywhere near enough. A lot of hospitals seem to think that a signature on a form is informed consent. I’ve noticed in hospitals that where consent used to be a noun, it is now a verb, so people will say, ‘Has she been consented yet?’ Consent was something you used to give, but now it’s something that is done for you. That practice is quite different to what the law says.”

THE Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare is also concerned about how well patients are informed of their options before they get a chance to consent. The commission’s chief executive, Professor Deb Picone, said research showed about half of patients received clear information about the pros and cons of treatments. This is a problem because better informed patients often choose different approaches than their doctors may have predicted. A study last year in the journal *Annals of Plastic Surgery* showed that while doctors thought 71 per cent of patients with breast cancer rated keeping their breasts as a top priority, only 7 per cent of patients agreed. Similarly, doctors thought 96 per cent of breast cancer patients rated living as long as possible a top priority when only 59 per cent felt that way.

CROCK says doctors should invite patients from the outset to be partners in their care so they feel safe to mention their concerns at any moment. But if doctors are to develop more respect for patients’ views, she says they have to learn to respect each other in the health system as well. A study of healthcare professionals by Melbourne psychologist Toni Mellington found more than 70 per cent were either being bullied or had been bullied and felt their health suffered as a result. This worries Crock, who

says intimidation and disruptive behaviour are considered so unsafe in the US that it has been the subject of a national warning by the Joint Commission, an organisation that accredits and certifies more than 18,000 healthcare organisations. The commission said such behaviour, including verbal outbursts, impatience and reluctance to answer questions, contributed to adverse events, more expensive care and the loss of dedicated health professionals.

THE connection between such conflict and adverse events was demonstrated by a widely publicised and tragic incident at a Melbourne hospital in 2001, when a trainee doctor chose not to check an unusual sounding prescription with her superior because she did not want to bother him. At a medical board hearing in 2006, the trainee said she found senior staff at the hospital intimidating and said there was a culture in which questions or lack of knowledge were frowned on. “You were made to feel very little if you didn’t know something,” she said at the hearing. The trainee gave an incorrect dose of the medication to the patient. It caused severe brain damage. To start breaking down this counterproductive culture, Crock says senior staff should be involved in “360 degree” evaluations of their performance by junior staff, as well as patients, so they are more accountable. She says some US hospitals are cracking down on staff who cannot work in teams. At the world-leading Mayo Clinic, workers are now being given a single warning before being sacked for rude exchanges with other staff. Crock also wants to see hospital chief executives encourage patients and staff to report unprofessional behaviour and says universities should teach medical students more about treating colleagues with respect and the merits of listening to patients and their families more carefully and encouraging them to be partners.

TO impress the need for change on health professionals, Crock has teamed up with actor and writer Alan Hopgood (*And the Big Men Fly*, *Alvin Purple*) (Pictured below with Dr Catherine Crock) to create a play about communication and errors in hospitals. The play, *Hear Me*, details the aftermath of a patient’s death from the perspective of the patient’s mother, the hospital CEO, the



supervising doctor and his colleague. It is already being performed for health professionals at conferences and meetings and will continue next year.

WHILE many health professionals are working in an overwhelmed system with little time to review and change their practice, Dr Marie Bismark, an expert on patients' rights at Melbourne University's school of law, says there are good economic reasons for politicians and hospital chiefs to encourage more patient-centred care. "There is so much waste in the system at the moment. The Institute of Medicine in America estimates that 30 cents in every health dollar is wasted on unnecessary services, inefficient care or failure to prevent problems. There are so many opportunities to not only improve the safety and quality of healthcare but to make it more cost effective and free up resources for other health services," says Bismark, who trained as both a lawyer and medical doctor. "These things need to be thought of as something that doesn't take a lot of time and effort, but something that will help people do their jobs more effectively."

CROCK says although she felt some reluctance to raise the alarm on safety breaches she saw during her recent hospital experience, she did discuss her concerns with senior staff in the end. She was encouraged by their response. "They were delighted to get the feedback. They said 'please tell us everything you notice, we want to use this'. It was a real eye-opener. Instead of being threatened by the feedback, they saw it as an opportunity for improvement," she says. "People might not always get such a positive response, but if patients and their families are welcomed with open arms the way I was, I think we'll start to see things change." ☺

How To Help Yourself

- Make notes on symptoms and concerns and make sure you convey them to health professionals, even if they try to rush you.

- Ask questions. In order to be empowered and engaged, you need to understand your choices.

- Trust your instincts. If you think something is wrong, speak up. Don't be afraid to ask for a second opinion.

- Ask a family member or friend to attend appointments and support you during a hospital stay. Take notes about important information such as medication names and doses.

- Seek high-quality information. A lot of health information is available online through government websites such as www.betterhealth.gov.au or patient and family support groups.

- Links: www.aipfcc.org.au



Visiting UK Fellow

The President Murray Ashby & Treasurer Shane Ringin recently hosted 2013 UK Winston Churchill Fellow Mr. Michael (Mike) Heyes, Science and Maths Specialism Coordinator, The Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls Queens Drive Acton United Kingdom.

Mike (Pictured below, on the left, with Murray) was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in the United Kingdom to study Methods for engaging students in STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) in Australia & New Zealand. Mike is a keen sports fan and his bucket list included a trip to the members pavilion at the MCG, which coincided with a magnificent win by Carlton over Richmond. ☺



Any News!!!!

Contributions to the newsletter most welcome. Let us know about your achievements and keep your fellow Fellows informed.

info@churchillfellowsvic.org.au

Lego clubs are a haven for those children who take a little time to fit in

Rob Deakin started Lego Clubs for children and has found that construction play can help children on the autism spectrum as well as children who don't fit into the usual sporting clubs.

On a lazy Saturday afternoon in inner Melbourne, there's a steady trickle of children wandering through the shops, looking wide-eyed and a little dazed, like they can't quite believe their luck. Their destination is a shopfront tucked away on the wrong side of the railway line, its windows full of giant Lego models, the kind that takes days, not hours, to complete. Rob Deakin, a Lego fan "from pre-natal", was still setting up on his first day at the Fairfield shop, Inside the Brick, when hopeful kids and parents started dropping in.

Inside the Brick is the end point in a journey Deakin started about four years ago, when he left the lucrative world of corporate cyber security to start a business running Lego workshops and clubs, fuelled by the goal of "making a community for all these kids who didn't have one".

It's a journey that has taken Deakin from his own simple enthusiasm for making things, into the complex world of autism, children's play and the latest research both here and overseas. Deakin, a self-described "king of the nerds" - "red hair, glasses and braces, at a Queensland boarding school"- had noticed that many of the kids and adults who came along to Lego events were socially awkward. When he started running Lego groups there were always a few parents who would gratefully explain how much the group meant to their child who had few friends or struggled with social difficulties.

"We'd get these mums with a tear in their eye or biting their bottom lip. At first I thought I'd done something wrong [but] their kids had no friends or play dates, this was a first."

Deakin had little clue about autism and autism disorders such as Asperger's syndrome when he began renting space at the Abbotsford Convent in 2011 to start running Lego clubs. "I barely knew the difference between autism and Down syndrome back then. We did all these stupid things like changing around the tables from one



Robert Deakin — 2012 Fellow
To establish a national program to assist young children with Autism Spectrum Disorders to overcome social isolation and help build friendships

week to the next and running building competitions; great for the kid who wins but we'd have all these other kids having meltdowns," he says.

The terms autism spectrum and Asperger's started coming up more often among the parents Deakin was seeing at his workshops and in some of the studies he began to track down online, which looked at the benefits of Lego for kids on the autism spectrum.

Fast-forward a couple of years and Deakin won a prestigious Churchill Fellowship to travel overseas and pursue his interest in Lego, and construction play generally, and find out more about children on the autism spectrum. He visited the National Autistic Society in London, the Autism Research Centre in Cambridge and, of course, his personal mecca, Lego HQ in Denmark.

"The trip gave me confidence that I was on the right path with the Lego clubs idea. Why do we have football clubs, swimming clubs and other sports clubs in every community, but for construction play, this fundamental stage in human development, we don't have clubs," he says.

What Deakin observed with the groups was that sharing a common interest in Lego instantly gave the kids a social community, and for many it was the first social group they belonged to.

"A lot of these kids are not fitting into Auskick or Scouts. Team sports can be tough for them. These are kids who've never asked another kid their name, but they can talk for hours about *Star Wars* or *Harry Potter*." Deakin, who would like to see a template for Lego clubs similar to the Scouts model, says he no longer believes in running special Lego clubs for kids with autism; instead he aims for a ratio of socially typical kids to kids with social difficulties.

Inside the Brick has been set up as a social enterprise, which means that 50 per cent of the profits will go towards helping others set up Lego clubs along similar lines. Deakin is anxious, for example, that the clubs don't become used as an excuse to sell kids more Lego. Lego is certainly not the first toy to have a special appeal for kids on the autism spectrum, with many attracted to Thomas the Tank Engine and collectables such as Pokemon and My Little Pony.

Professor Cheryl Dissanayake, director of the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre at La Trobe University, says the appeal of Lego for kids with autism probably centres on their strength in spatial skills - they're often great at puzzles and block design - and their particular style of information processing.

Dissanayake says while researchers had once thought that children with autism were unable to engage in pretend play or games based on imagination, it was more accurate to say that they engaged in particular types of pretend play, such as Lego. Similarly, there is a common myth that children on the autism spectrum don't want to have friends. "Of course they want to have friends, but it tends to be around their common interests," she says.

Communication for kids on the autism spectrum tends to be pragmatic, or used for a definite purpose, Dissanayake says, so an activity around a shared interest, such as Lego, can be very successful in motivating these children to communicate.

"Anything that brings children with autism into contact with others with a common interest is going to be good. And other kids in the Lego club won't all have autism so that will help develop the social skills of the child with autism."

Dissanayake says the most recent research has found that about 2 per cent of children at school, or one in 50, have an autism spectrum disorder, many of these not diagnosed until they get to school.

Common features of autism disorders include difficulty understanding social rules and non-verbal cues, difficulty communicating, repetitive behaviours and narrow interests. Some children also have delayed motor skills, both fine and gross.

Rita Layfield has become a big fan of Lego over the past year or so, since her son Nick has grown increasingly fascinated with the little plastic blocks. For Nick, 8, who has Asperger's syndrome, Lego has helped to give him the social passport that he was lacking, particularly at school. Layfield says Nick started finding it even harder to fit in at school once a lot of his peers started playing footy and four square every lunchtime.

"He's not a sporty kid, not interested in sport at all ... but that's where Lego has helped him because there's always talk about Lego with the boys at school," she says.

Although he attends a group aimed at learning the unwritten social rules that don't come easily to kids on the autism spectrum, Layfield says a common interest in Lego has definitely helped break down some of the barriers to friendships with other children.

Lego also gives Nick an alternative to the computer screen, a battleground for so many parents, and Layfield credits it with helping to improve her son's fine motor skills, which are delayed. These days, when the family goes out with others, Nick always takes some Lego with him and the children generally end up building something together. "It has definitely opened up a lot of doors. Even with kids where they don't really get along, they'll start talking about Lego and they'll usually end up building something together." ☺



What Marita Cheng did next

2011 Churchill Fellow and Young Australian of the Year, Marita Cheng assembling a robot at Melbourne University.

You're a brilliant young computer science student who was awarded Young Australian of the Year in 2012 after you founded an international organisation to get girls interested in high tech careers.

You've got a swag of scholarships and fellowships under your belt, including

The Nancy Fairfax Churchill Fellowship to study strategies to get girls interested in science, engineering and technology, and you're in demand as a guest speaker in Australia and overseas. You're about to graduate from the University of Melbourne with a double degree in mechatronics and computer science after seven years on the books.

Do you:

- a) take one of the hundreds of job offers that have come your way in the past two years;
- b) leapfrog into a career in academia, courtesy of your high profile; or
- c) start a company that makes bionic arms for people with disabilities?

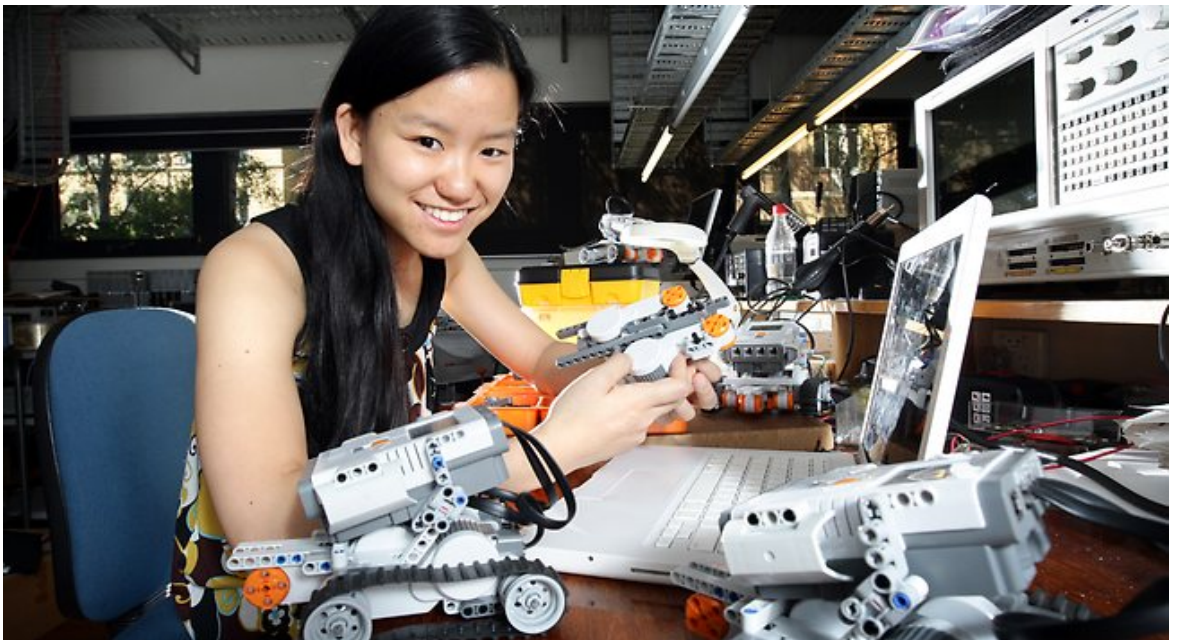
Option C, says 24-year-old Robogals founder Marita Cheng, who's preparing to throw herself full-time into 2Mar Robotics, the start-up she launched in April, when she graduates at the end of the year. Her vision is to produce a bionic arm which can be used as daily living aid for people with limited hand movement, due to spinal injuries and disabilities such as multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's Disease. The arm can be mounted in multiple places around the home, including the kitchen and bathroom, and is controlled by iPhone.

"I really wanted to make a robot that was useful to people and changed people's lives and this was a way I could do it,"

Cheng says. The idea drew enthusiastic feedback from the Spinal Injuries Association when first mooted, Cheng says: "People thought it was a dream come true."

There are 20,000 people with spinal injuries in Australia and around three million worldwide. As well as offering people

more independence, investing in robotic devices makes sound economic sense, Cheng says. Her arm may reduce the amount of human assistance some people need to perform basic tasks



and save thousands in carer costs, she says. Cheng's first group of users will begin testing a prototype in their homes next month and she hopes to have the arm available commercially by April next year. Pricing is yet to be determined but Cheng hopes to collaborate with not-for-profits which can provide grant funding to suitable recipients.

"I feel really lucky, I know what I'm doing next year...I'm looking forward to it, I can spend more time on this," Cheng says. Striking out on her own, rather than fast tracking into an international firm, seems a logical progression for someone who cites Steve Jobs as an inspiration. "I got so many job offers last year, it was a real dream but I always knew I wanted to start a company," Cheng says.

"I have energy and I like to put that energy into something...I like having a vision and making it happen in real life."

Jamie Evans is the academic whose suggestions Cheng do something to encourage young girls into engineering led her to found Robogals in 2008. The organisation, which sends students into schools to teach girls robotics, has 17 chapters in four countries and has run workshops for 11,000 girls.

Now the head of electrical and computer systems engineering at Monash University, Evans says Cheng's segue into the start-up world is no surprise. "She is a quintessential entrepreneur – someone who is not interested in finding reasons that things can't be done but rather believing that something is important and making it happen, regardless of the limited resources at her disposal," Evans says.

"She likes to set her own agenda and, given the amazing things she has already achieved, I could not imagine her taking a graduate job in a big company. I see her as a serial entrepreneur moving from one venture to another over the years." ☺

Drugs court pilot puts children first

Gregory Levine — 2011 Fellow
A Study of Family Drug Treatment Courts
in the United States and the United Kingdom:
Giving parents and children the best
chance of reunification.



The Children's Court of Victoria will trial an Australian-first family drug court next year, as part of a new approach to reduce instances of children being taken into foster or state care.

The court will preside over a "holistic approach" to child protection matters involving one or more parents with a substance abuse issue. If reuniting a family is not possible, the court will aim to make permanent changes to living conditions quicker, in most cases within 12 months.

The three-year trial will initially be concerned with parents aged under 21 who have at least one child aged under three. It will be based at the William Cooper Justice Centre in the CBD before being moved to Broadmeadows in mid 2015.

Magistrate Gregory Levine will spearhead the pilot, which he has helped develop in recent years. Mr Levine researched how the US and British legal systems use their family drug courts to lower instances of family separations.

His report stated there were high costs for children associated with out-of-home care, including placement instability, behavioural problems and poor academic performance. In the past 10 years, the number of children being placed in out-of-home care has increased by 44 per cent throughout the state.

He said the current system, which relies on social workers, had little co-ordinated or effective communication between parents and agencies and there was no systemic support for parents to complete treatment programs. The pilot will feature co-ordinated case management between parents, children, the court and support services. Closely monitoring treatment and parenting will be a key feature.

The pilot has been welcomed by health and welfare organisations, which have been campaigning for years for a different approach to the current system.

Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association CEO Sam Biondo said the current system involving drug or alcohol-dependent parents often resulted in children being separated, which "breaks up the family and complicates things further". "We've been looking at the evidence of drug courts for a while about how they deal with complex social issues," he said. "They're not well served by the current justice system."



Judge Peter Couzens, President of the Children's Court of Victoria, said the pilot would provide the opportunity for parents to "engage in an intensive program aimed at addressing their underlying issues with a view to increasing their prospects of resuming day-to-day care of their children".

The 2012 vulnerable children report found children were most vulnerable when one or both parents had a drug or alcohol problem and that they had a strong chance of being traumatised due to the court's adversarial nature.

A Children's Court of Victoria spokeswoman said about 65 per cent of child protection cases involved either drugs or alcohol. In 2011-12, more than 3000 new applications for the protection of children. ☺

CFAV Appreciation

The CFAV presented the Victorian College for the Deaf with a plaque in recognition of their assistance in providing the use of facilities to the committee of the Churchill Fellows Association of Victoria between 2006 and 2013. The use of the colleges facilities have been invaluable in the organisation of CFAV business and functions.



Murray Ashby CFAV President presents Julie Rees, Acting Principal Victorian College for the Deaf and CFAV Committee member with a plaque of appreciation.

Sustainable school keeps proving it's no flush in the pan

Bill Thomas would love to see Bentleigh Secondary College students "piddle for their country".

Bill Thomas is a 2012 Victorian Fellow, having been awarded a fellowship to investigate sustainability education and sustainability practice with emphasis on water, waste, energy and biodiversity - Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Iceland.

One of his latest projects is to build a new toilet with Rotary at the school, which would separate urine and pipe it to a tank to be harvested for a year and then used as fertiliser. "It's a way of connecting kids back to the land - once they get past the ick factor, it will be 'first one to piddle for your country'," jokes Mr Thomas, the head of sustainable practices at Bentleigh Secondary College. "We also teach how urine can be used in rural areas and third world countries."

Sustainability is one of the driving forces at Bentleigh Secondary College, which was last year named the world's most sustainable education institution at the 7th International Green Awards in London. The school has planted a 2000 square metre native forest, reduced its water consumption by 91 per cent since 2006 by identifying leaks and using tanks for toilet flushing and installed a 5.25 kilowatt solar system and wind turbine. As of Sunday, the solar-system had saved 51,708 kilograms of greenhouse gases since 2007 - the pollution the average car emits over 4162 days.

A wetland - home to Elvis the eel and turtles Terry and Bubbles - has been constructed on the school grounds, with excess storm water treated and then used to irrigate one of the school's playing fields. The wetlands are also used as outdoor science labs: "We got a little test tube, took out some water and put it under the microscope. To stop the bugs from moving we put glycerine in the water," says year 8 student Brayden Berchy.

Mr Thomas is assisted by a team of student eco-warriors called the Green Machine, who meet fortnightly at lunch times. One recent initiative was to successfully persuade Bentleigh Secondary to stop distributing paper newsletters and only publish them on the school website.

Mr Thomas said many of the projects would not have been possible without community contributions. Architects Suters and builder Dzine Constructions saved the school up to \$250,000 with their assistance with the 100 per cent recyclable meditation centre, while former student Nigel Holmes donated \$11,000 for the wind turbine that will power the centre. ☺



The Green Machine (back from left) Noa Shaul, Lachlan Finnegan, Sarah Radlow; Bill Thomas (middle); Brayden Berchy.

Churchill Fellow Joins Avenue of Legends

One of the most respected and loved figures in Australian Football, the late Jim Stynes, will be immortalised with a bronze statue to be erected outside the MCG. Stynes is the fifth sportsperson, after cricket legends Shane Warne and Neil Harvey, and football greats Norm Smith and John Coleman, to feature in the Avenue of Legends.

During Stynes' 264-game career with Melbourne, he played 244 consecutive games from 1987-98, a record that still stands. In 1991, he became the only non-Australian-born VFL/AFL player to claim the Brownlow medal. He won four best and fairest awards, twice earned All-Australian selection and was credited with redefining the role of the modern-day ruckman.

Off-field, Stynes focused on youth work, co-founding the not-for-profit Reach Foundation in 1994 to help at-risk children realise their potential. Stynes was named Victorian of the Year in 2001 and 2003, and was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 2006 to research his youth support work.

In 2007, he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his work with youth and contribution to Australian rules football. Stynes was also named Melbourne of the Year for 2010 for his Reach Foundation work. He was awarded the Australian Catholic University's Doctor of the University in recognition of his social work.

In 2009, Stynes was diagnosed with metastatic melanoma and continued to work during his treatment for brain metastasis. He died in March 2012 and was honoured by a state funeral held at St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne on 27 March 2012. The bronze statue will be unveiled later this year, at a date yet to be announced.. ☺

Mentioned in Despatches

The Honours List provides national and formal recognition for those Australians across the nation who have made a significant difference to their communities. Our Australian honours system is internationally renowned and respected.

Australia's distinctive honours system began in 1975 with the creation of the Order of Australia, to recognise service to the nation or humanity. Australian honours are unique in that they were designed for the community to make nominations. The Australian honours system is free of patronage or political influence.

The Hon. Margaret White AO - LL.B
(Adel) 1966 - National Trust Chairman

- Master of the Supreme Court of Queensland, 1990;
- Judge of the Supreme Court 1992-2013;
- Deputy President of the Defence Force Discipline Appeals Tribunal since 2008;
- Commander RANR 2003-2010;
- Member of the Senate of the University of Queensland 1993-2009 and Deputy Chancellor 2006-2009;
- Awarded a Centenary Medal for services to law in 2003



The CFAV extends its warmest congratulations to the National Chair of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, The Hon. Justice Margaret White for her recognition by the Commonwealth of Australia and her peers with the appointment as an Officer of the Order of Australia in January 2013.: For distinguished service to the judiciary and the law, through leadership in administration, contributions to education and law reform, and to the community of Queensland.

Jo Cavanagh OAM 1990 (VIC) To observe the implementation of innovative programmes which have been developed in response to research identifying the incidence of abuse of children in substitute care



Received the Medal (OAM) of the Order of Australia in the General Division : *For her outstanding contribution to community service.*

Jo graduated with honours in Social Work in 1976 and has worked for government, private and community sector organisations. Her ability to lead social change has been recognised by a Churchill Fellowship, Robyn Clarke Inspirational Leadership award, and Paul Harris Rotary Fellowship. She has held

a range of leadership positions on regional, state and national government advisory bodies, and is a regular presenter at national and international conferences and forums.

Her innovative solutions have set international benchmarks with many organisations adopting her programs for the benefit of their communities. Jo has produced a number of research papers and has been consulted and cited in many influential reports, including reports from the Australian Government, the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Mercy Family Services, the CREATE Foundation, the Centre for Social Impact, The Australian Law Reform Commission and Monash University.

Noel Maughan OAM 1982 (VIC) To study the Pig industry, particularly the effects on producers of environmental and animal welfare issues. USA, Canada, UK



Noel was an Australian politician and the Nationals member for Rodney in the Victorian Legislative Assembly from 1989 until 2006.

Prior to entering Parliament at a by-election in March 1989, Noel was an active member of the agriculture sector. He was the Chairman of the Pig Council of the Victorian Farmers Federation, the spokesman on animal welfare for the Australian Pig Industry, a Member of the Australian Pork Producers' Federation, and of the Pig Research Council. He also served on the Minister for Agriculture's Animal Welfare Advisory Committee and on Melbourne University's School of Agriculture Animal Ethics Committee.

Noel is from Echuca and was awarded an Order of Australia Medal for his service to the Victorian Parliament, as well as to agriculture and rural health.

Noel was the National party's Member for Rodney from 1989 to 2006 and has served on dozens of boards and committees since the late 1950s.

He says he believes everyone can make a contribution to the community. "My motivation has been about getting involved," he said. "I've not sought office in any of these positions, that hasn't been the motivation. The motivation has been to get involved, to make a change for the better."

Mentioned in Despatches



Christina Hindhaugh OAM 1988 (VIC) To study broad-acre medicinal herb production and export marketing.

Christina might have had good reason to feel a bit left out. She's one of four siblings and, until today, was the only one who did not have an Order of Australia citation.

Now she has joined the family, having been honoured with an Order of Australia Medal in the general division (OAM) for her services to the community of Balmoral and to women in agriculture. Mrs Hindhaugh, who lives in Buninyong, is the executive director of the Glenelg River Rosemary Farm, the largest commercial rosemary farm in the southern hemisphere. She is the secretary of the Friends of Buninyong Botanical Garden, former president of Balmoral's Australian Red Cross branch and patron of the Balmoral Health Appeal.

Her eldest sister is Tamie Fraser, who received her Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) citation for her services to the nation. Brother Hugh Beggs was honoured with a Member of the Order (AM) for services to the wool industry, while sister Eda Ritchie also received an AM for service to education, government, the arts and health.

"I often pointed it out to them that I was the only one who did not have one, but they never pointed it out to me. It was just good-hearted family banter," Mrs Hindhaugh laughs. "We are known as a very close family and we were brought up with a very strong ethic of community service."

"I feel enormously humbled by it. I look around my local community and see people who also might deserve one more than I perhaps. I will dedicate the award to the community of Balmoral of which I am very proud to be a member. I am also very proud to be part of the Ballarat community and am delighted to be living in semi-retirement in Buninyong."

In a sense, it is the second part of Mrs Hindhaugh's citation which she is most enthusiastic about – for services to women in agriculture.

She says the role of women in the bush hasn't received the recognition it deserves, particularly from those living in the large cities.

"I am proud to accept the award on behalf of farming women."

Mrs Hindhaugh says. "I have written books about what it is like to be a farming woman in the western district that was sold all over. I travelled all over Australia promoting the lives of farming women. "Women are often the backbone of the country in terms of running small communities. That role goes unheralded at times." Mrs Hindhaugh says she is approaching the age of 70 "as slowly as possible" and, while happily semi-retired, retains a passion for innovation in agriculture

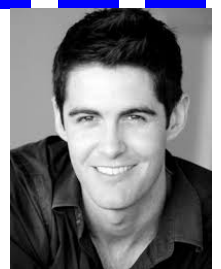
Notable Mentions

Molly Carlile 2008 (VIC) To explore the use of the arts in health promotion and in initiating community "death discussions."



Molly Carlile is a multi-award winning palliative care activist, author and international speaker. Known as the Deathtalker, she supports people to become informed about death and grief in order to live life fully. Molly has enjoyed some recent successes when she was presented with the International Journal of Palliative Nursing Educator of the Year 2012 Award in London. Recently she received the Deakin University and Health Super Award for Leadership in Nursing and Midwifery Award in addition to the Minister's Award for Outstanding Achievement at the Victorian Public Healthcare Awards.

Matthew Robinson 2011 (VIC) The Gilbert Spottiswood Churchill fellowship to study book-writing, composition and lyric-writing for musical theatre under the mentorship of Stephen Schwartz - USA.



Matthew was awarded a 2013 Australia Council Music Fellowship which provides him with \$100,000 over two years to generate new musical theatre works across Australia, the U.S. and U.K. The show that Matthew was mentored by Stephen Schwartz on in 2011 through the Churchill Fellowship (Happy People) has been picked up for its first American theatre company developmental reading. The company is called Village Theatre in Washington State. We've been told by musical theatre historians that Matthew's show *Happy People* is the first Australian musical entirely written by one person to ever be developed in America.

Vale

CONRAD H WOOD

1969 Churchill Fellow - Aviation in forestry and firefighting

1938 – 2014

Sadly we acknowledge the passing of Conrad Holmes Wood, pioneer of forestry and fire aviation in Australia, not to mention raconteur, poet and pilot. Conrad died at home on 31 January, aged 75, after a long illness.

If ever anyone could claim (and not that he ever would) to have pioneered aerial firefighting and forestry aviation in Australia it was Woody. "Conrod" graduated from the Victorian School of Forestry in 1957 and joined the then Forests Commission of Victoria and soon found his way into the Forest Protection Division. Con championed the setting up of proper contractual arrangements for aviation and was involved in implementing the first ongoing, organised contracts for firebombing in eastern Victoria in the 1960s. In 1969 he was one of earliest recipients of a Churchill Fellowship and travelled extensively in North America studying aviation in forestry and firefighting. We still trade on some of the international relationships established by Conrad around that time.

Woody had a passion for innovation and new technology and was instrumental in introducing new aircraft types and new approaches for forest firefighting and forest management. Amongst many other things, he played a major role in organising the trial of a RAAF C130 equipped with MAFFS for firebombing in south-eastern Australia in 1982-84, even piloting the lead plane.



His inimitable style was crucial in successfully bringing together the cultures of the myriad organisations involved. Con advocated for the introduction of helicopters. He developed aerial fertilising and seeding techniques for forest management. He even managed to get involved in cloud seeding experiments for forest fire suppression and for improving water yield.



An early 1980's "Portrait of Conrad Wood" by local artist and 1968 Fellow Joyce McGrath OAM.

Along with aviation, Conrad was passionate about literature, football, politics, food, drink, motorbikes, gardening and Glen Iris, to name a few. He was a committed campaigner on social justice issues and for many years read for vision impaired people on public radio. There are plenty of grateful firefighters around who would remember Con's determined and instrumental contributions to the campaign for the option to retire at age 50, of which he promptly availed himself and embarked on other adventures!

Of course such people are the stuff of legends and there is no shortage of stories told about Conrad. The trouble was that mostly they were based in fact. Many of Con's exploits were indeed legendary, with no need for embellishment! Most are best left for re-telling in true Conrad style - with oysters and beer.....

No mention of Conrad's passing would be complete without acknowledging the sterling support of Clare, his partner of 28 years who unflinchingly nursed Con through his difficult, extended illness. Thank you Clare, on behalf of all.

Thank you Conrad for your profound contribution to aviation in fire management and forestry in this country.

Fly well Woody, passionate innovator, mentor and friend.

Vale



Michael (Mike) Letch OAM
2006 Fellow

Mike Letch died on the 22nd November 2013 in the Bethlehem Hospital after a long illness.

Mike was a T6 paraplegic, the result of a speedway motorcycle racing accident in 1970, and led an active national and international level sporting life ever since.

Mike worked as a Consultant and Case Manager with Acquired Brain and Spinal Injury as Co-ordinator of the Major Accident Division of the TAC, and as Director of Wheelchair Sports Victoria.

Not one to let his accident curb his love of speed and adventure, Mike has represented Australia in road races and marathons in his custom-made wheelchair in competitions in Europe, USA and Japan. He is a three time winner of the Melbourne Marathon. He was a scuba diving instructor and Marine Environmentalist and Australia's first paraplegic dive professional. Mike became Australia's first light-plane paraplegic pilot using modified hand controls.

In 2006 Mike was awarded a Winston Churchill Memorial Trust (WCMT) Fellowship to study programs in Europe and the United States that have successfully trained people with disabilities to scuba dive and snorkel to assist with the establishment of the Australian Association of Divers with Disabilities.

In 2012 Mike Letch was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his many years of inspired service to the disabled, especially with his innovative in-water programmes to people with a disability through the Disabled Divers Association, an association which he founded in 2007 and of which he was President.

As well as his work Mike has been active on a range of committees and councils including the Community Service Panel of the WCMT, Churchill Fellows Victoria Committee member, Sports Federation Council, the Disability Action Centre; and the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Sexuality and Disability Policy.

Mike leaves a brother, Peter, and countless people around the world – of all abilities – whom he mentored and inspired.



A great diver & a great man. Seen here freediving at Ricketts Point three years ago.



"We make a living by what we get,
but we make a life by what we give."

Sir Winston Churchill

Did you know???

Churchill Won a Nobel Prize

Maybe this one's not so surprising, but the subject is. Churchill brought home a Nobel for literature. The Nobel committee considered Churchill for the prize off and on for years after World War II thanks to the strength of his historical writing, but they always had trouble pulling the trigger and actually awarding him the prize. (One of the problems was that Churchill's main output was as a historian, an area that garnered little literary support.

Worse still, the Nobel committee had previously deemed Churchill's lone work of fiction, the 1899 novel *Savrola*, to be "without literary merit".)

By 1953, though, Churchill had finally built up enough support to nab the award over the likes of E.M. Forster and Hemingway. When Churchill received the prize, the committee praised him particularly for his six-volume history *The Second World War* and "for his mastery of historical and biographical description as well as for brilliant oratory in defending exalted human values"

NEWSLETTER OF THE CHURCHILL FELLOWS' ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

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Elect (2008)
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Andrew Nixon (2007)
Joh Kirby (2010)

Daphne Cheah, (On Leave) (2002)

Bulldog, CFAV Newsletter

Shane Ringin, Editor

info@churchillfellowsvic.org.au

KEY DATES

2014 Returning Fellows &
Medallion Presentation
Dinner

Friday 9 May 2014

CFAV 2013 New Fellow
Dinner & AGM

Friday 1 August 2014

**Churchill Fellows' 50th NATIONAL
CONVENTION
Sydney**

9—11 October 2015