Building our future
YOUR DONATIONS TO RMIT
Thank you, for giving the gift of education

I believe education is the most transformative gift that you can give. And this is something that each one of you—our valuable donors—have contributed to RMIT and our students.

This publication is our way of saying thank you to each and every one of you who has given to the University, and to showcase your donations at work. Our donor community stretches beyond Australian borders as far as Singapore, mainland China, Hong Kong and the USA, reflecting RMIT’s global reach.

There are so many stories of how giving to education at RMIT creates powerful change, and this publication highlights just a handful. As a donor to RMIT myself, I constantly see the impact of giving to RMIT across the University and in the community.

Whether your donation supports scholarships for disadvantaged or high-achieving students, helps RMIT enhance our global reach, or assists research and innovation, all of your gifts support our vision to enrich and transform the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce RMIT’s new Chancellor, Dr Ziggy Switkowski, one of Australia’s most respected technology, innovation and business leaders. His distinguished career in business includes his work as CEO and Managing Director of Telstra, CEO of Optus, and Chairman of Kodak (Australia).

I am also delighted to introduce a new Development team, led by Director of Development, Melissa Smith, who was named the joint Global Fundraiser of the Year for 2011.

The Development team supports RMIT’s vision and brings opportunities to form deeper relationships with each of you. I hope you get a chance to meet members of the team in the coming year, if you haven’t already.

RMIT was built on a foundation of philanthropy, and in June this year we will celebrate 125 years since Melbourne philanthropist Francis Ormond donated £5,000 to establish the Working Men’s College in 1887, which was matched by smaller donations from the people of Melbourne.

Since that time, many other donors with vision and belief in the power of education have also chosen to give to RMIT in a whole variety of ways. Our anniversary is an opportunity to look to the future to consider how we want to shape the next 125 years – how to create solutions through innovation, build our presence in cities across the world to make a difference, and develop the global impact of our education and research.

Through your gifts to RMIT, you too are part of this legacy.

Each one of you is making a difference to the future of RMIT through all the ways that you give back to the University.

Professor Margaret Gardner, AO
Vice-Chancellor and President
Thank you, for contributing to transformative change

Since joining RMIT University last year, I have been inspired to hear many of your stories about your connections to RMIT and the reasons why you have chosen to give to support education, research and innovation at RMIT.

Each one of you helps create progressive change through your gifts, whether it’s as broad as helping RMIT establish a university campus in Vietnam, or as individual as providing one student with the means to move to the city to start their education at RMIT.

RMIT is committed to continue building its culture of giving, and to provide our donors with a high level of transparency and accountability. Your gifts help to support the strategic priorities of the University: scholarships for students, research and innovation, and campus development.

One thing that inspires me in this role is witnessing the human capacity to make change. You do not have to be a leading academic or a celebrated researcher to bring about a better future – everyone can make a contribution to social change.

I often hear inspiring stories about the power of education – many of you have chosen to give because of the difference tertiary education has made in your own life, or within your family.

This publication includes just a handful of these stories, and while we could not include every story, we hope to illustrate the strength and diversity of life here at RMIT, and the broad impact of your gifts, which support so many different outcomes.

RMIT has a long history and culture of giving – throughout our history so many individuals, businesses and organisations have helped build RMIT into the global university of technology and design it is today. This culture will continue thanks to each of you, as we celebrate our 125-year anniversary and look to our legacy for the next 125 years.

My team and I look forward to hearing more from you over the coming year and welcoming you on campus.

Melissa Smith
Director of Development

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RMIT WELCOMES KIM SCOTT
NEW WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE

Australian writer Kim Scott, who won the 2011 Miles Franklin Award for his novel That Deadman Dance, was named RMIT’s Writer-in-Residence last year.

The RMIT Writers-in-Residence program is supported generously through the Copyright Agency Limited Cultural Fund and provides students with an opportunity to learn from award winning writers through class sessions and workshops.

Associate Professor Scott, the ninth writer to join the program since it began in 2009, also won the inaugural Victorian Prize for Literature and the Victorian Premier’s Literary Award for Fiction.

RMIT QUARTER IN MELBOURNE SET TO GROW

RMIT’s $800 million capital works program continues to take shape in Melbourne, including a number of new building projects. The RMIT Swanston Academic Building (pictured left), designed by Melbourne firm Lyons, is the largest investment in academic facilities ever undertaken by RMIT. The $50,000 square-metre, 11-storey building, which will be the home for RMIT’s College of Business, will be one of the largest teaching facilities in Australia.

RMIT is also continuing work on the Design Hub (pictured above), a 12,000 square metre building, designed by architect and RMIT alumnus Sean Godsell. The building was made possible by a $28.6 million grant from the Federal Government’s Education Investment Fund.

NEW SCHOLARSHIP NAMED IN HONOUR OF RMIT PROFESSOR

An annual scholarship for first-year RMIT University students has been established in memory of the late Emeritus Professor John Jackson. It is one of the most generous philanthropic scholarships available at RMIT.

Emeritus Professor Jackson held a number of high-profile roles at RMIT from 1991 to 2003, and saw the University grow as an international provider of educational excellence and establish new territory in research. Professor Jackson had a strong reputation in economics and was co-author of eight editions of the book Economics with Ron McIver.

His legacy will continue through a scholarship offered by the trustees of his estate. The Emeritus Professor John Jackson Scholarship will recognise his vision to provide access to tertiary education for students facing socio-economic disadvantage.

GENEROSITY HELPS HEALTH SCIENCE RESEARCHERS

An international entrepreneur with interests in wellness, philanthropy, social justice and ecological sustainability has made a donation to help RMIT University researchers examine detoxification programs.

Bharat Mitra co-founded Organic India, which has pioneered socially responsible business practices in its organic farming of tulsi, a widely revered herb in India with strong antioxidant, antibacterial and immune-enhancing properties.

Motivated by both personal and professional interest in wellness and complementary medicine, Mr Mitra is supporting the research RMIT is currently undertaking in this area.

READ MORE RMIT NEWS AT WWW.RMIT.EDU.AU/NEWS

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Design Hub

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In New York I had the wonderful opportunity to take a semester in footwear design at the Fashion Institute of Technology. You can be a little bit more adventurous in footwear, and I like to use unconventional materials and quite striking and statement pieces. That was a skill that I learned in New York that I’ve been able to bring back, and now I will definitely pursue a career in footwear fashion.

The street fashion in New York is amazing, and for a fashion student like me, so much inspiration. People aren’t afraid to be adventurous with what they wear. For example, you see a lot of headpieces in the street – you don’t really see that in Australia unless you go to the races.

I was there during the heart of the fashion week, and I’d never seen anything like it. I attended Fashion’s Night Out, and that’s when everyone in Manhattan dresses in their finest, and there are fashionistas everywhere. I was walking alongside Karl Lagerfeld at one stage, and I just thought, a little Aussie like me, being face to face with the likes of Karl Lagerfeld – that was truly amazing.

New York is very expensive, especially for a student. Because of visa restrictions, I couldn’t work in the US and study at the same time. So the John Storey scholarship was really essential to allow me to study there.

Since I came back to Melbourne I’ve been working on a boutique shoe label. The name of my label is Helo, an abbreviation of my names. Recently I held a label launch, where I showed pieces I had designed and made in New York. All my friends and family came along, so that was a big moment for me, to show everyone what I’d been doing in New York.

The whole experience of going to New York has changed my life. I would definitely like to thank the John Storey Junior Memorial Scholarship program for giving me the opportunity to go. And to all the supporters of scholarships that help us students – thank you!
It began with just 31 students in a small converted building in Ho Chi Minh City in 2001, but thanks to one special donor, now RMIT Vietnam provides education to thousands of students who will help Vietnam develop as a nation for generations to come.

Talk to any student at RMIT Vietnam and you’ll hear inspiring words and big plans for the future: “There aren’t many Vietnamese researchers. I really want to attempt to fill in that gap and show the world that Vietnamese people can be very good researchers,” says Dang Nguyen, who is studying a Bachelor of Professional Communication and also works as a student learning advisor at the campus.

Tuan Lam Minh is a current student who is also actively involved in sport at the campus. “At RMIT Vietnam I can access international education at an affordable price compared to studying abroad,” he says. “RMIT has encouraged me to develop my abilities, my passion, my responsibilities and my creativity. In the future, I may be the main income source of my family. Studying here I have more chances to learn and speak English, and to interact with international lecturers and teaching staff, so I build more confidence.”

The sentiment is echoed across the Vietnam Ho Chi Minh City campus. RMIT Vietnam was established by former Vice-Chancellor, Professor David Beanland and many of his colleagues. RMIT, with its emphasis on technology, design and work-ready graduates, was the perfect fit for a rapidly developing nation like Vietnam. A significant gift from Atlantic Philanthropies, led by American philanthropist Chuck Feeney, allowed RMIT to build a world-class campus in Ho Chi Minh City, which now has over 1,000 students.

“Without the contribution from Atlantic Philanthropies, RMIT Vietnam may not have come to pass,” says Professor Marilyn Liddell, President of RMIT Vietnam and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of RMIT.

With a lot of urban development and adaptation to climate change issues, says Professor Liddell. “In Hanoi we want to extend undergraduate teaching and become active in research, with a strong focus on environmental sustainability – issues that are of critical importance to Vietnam, and especially pertinent to some of the big challenges of Hanoi itself,” says Professor Liddell. “But to do that, we need substantial seed funding to boost the small provision we currently have.”

University graduates are in high demand in Vietnam, and will play a key role in sustainable nation-building over the next few decades. Ten years since RMIT Vietnam was established, nearly 4,000 students have graduated from RMIT Vietnam and are contributing to the workforce and the community, with big dreams for the future of Vietnam and the fast-growing region in which it is located.

Building Vietnam

As part of RMIT’s work-integrated learning program, students from RMIT Vietnam have helped design a Disability Day Care Centre in Dien Ban district, an impoverished region of central Vietnam. Dien Ban was heavily bombed with Agent Orange during the war, which has meant there is a large incidence of disability among children in the region, however, there were no services there to support families with disabled children.

Dr Esther Charlesworth, an RMIT Architecture alumnus, ARC Future Fellow and founder of Architects Without Frontiers Australia, developed a program called ‘Building the Community’, where RMIT students from a range of disciplines from Vietnam and Melbourne campuses collaborated to design a Disability Day Care Centre that would suit the needs of the local community.

When construction of the centre is completed this year, up to 80 kids from the region will receive physiotherapy, specialised teaching and special programs there at any one time. “This was a pioneering program that brought together the skills of a multidisciplinary team from RMIT. The students worked on a real project that will make a profound difference in the lives of many children,” says Dr Charlesworth.

Through similar RMIT programs, students have also used their skills to design a paediatric ward of a hospital in Da Nang, and have designed special accommodation for homeless young people to allow them to attend school.

If you’d like to find out more about giving to RMIT Vietnam, contact the Development office on +61 3 9925 5220, or email giving@rmit.edu.au
RMIT Vietnam has unveiled a new recreation and events complex and student accommodation building at Ho Chi Minh City campus, made possible thanks to a gift from Atlantic Philanthropies.

The $15 million recreation and events complex (nicknamed ‘The REC’) includes student accommodation, a sports field, a multi-functional basketball court, and a gymnasium. It also allows graduations to be held on campus for the first time.

The building was officially opened by Australian Foreign Minister, the Honourable Kevin Rudd, in April last year. More than 200 students, staff and VIP guests attended the opening ceremony.

In his speech, Mr Rudd praised RMIT for establishing a strong presence in Vietnam over the past ten years. He said the young people of Vietnam would offer “enormous opportunity” for their country if their productive potential could be fully realised. “And these young people, like the youth of the world, will want their voices heard in an increasingly pluralist system where people of the world, will want their voices heard in an increasingly pluralist system where continuing human rights challenges will need to be addressed,” he said.

After contributing more than $15 million to help establish the Ho Chi Minh City campus, Atlantic Philanthropies also wanted to ensure students had a well-rounded university experience. The organisation offered a further $6.5 million towards the recreation and events complex and student accommodation in Vietnam.

Atlantic Philanthropies was established by American businessman-turned-philanthropist, Mr Chuck Feeney. Mr Feeney was born into a blue-collar family in New Jersey during the Depression. He was the first member of his family to graduate from university, and feels that education played a key role in his later success. He co-founded the Duty Free Shoppers Group in 1960, which, over the next few decades, grew to become the world’s largest travel retailer.

In 1984 Mr Feeney transferred hundreds of millions of dollars of wealth that he had earned through his business into Atlantic Philanthropies, a philanthropic foundation he had started two years earlier, with the aim to help create enduring, systematic changes in the lives of disadvantaged people.

Mr Feeney has championed the idea of “giving while living” – spending philanthropic resources during his lifetime, and actively participating in the distribution of wealth to worthy organisations. Other high profile individuals like Microsoft founder Bill Gates have also pursued this model, setting up billion dollar foundations that aim to give away all their assets within a set timeframe.

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For more information about Atlantic Philanthropies or to read more about giving while living, visit: www.atlanticphilanthropies.org
It’s hard to imagine that not so long ago, being a woman meant that you were at home, that you were not educated, that you did not have any of the options that sometimes we take for granted.

Inder Kaur (above) graduating with her Masters from the University of Delhi in 1958, aged 47.

RMIT’s Professor Supriya Singh (right) has created a scholarship in memory of her mother.

When Professor Supriya Singh was seeking a way to honour her mother, she could think of no better tribute than to establish a scholarship in her mother’s name. “Education flows from the story of my mother’s life,” says Professor Singh. “It’s hard to imagine that not so long ago, being a woman meant that you were at home, that you were not educated, that you did not have any of the options that sometimes we take for granted. I can work anywhere in the world. For my mother, even getting the education so that she could work was very difficult.”

Professor Singh chose to establish a scholarship for refugee women studying an undergraduate course, as a way to both honour her mother and continue her mother’s legacy. “Life can be very difficult for refugees. Family commitments and the need to work can make study difficult. This scholarship will enable recipients to concentrate on what they most want to do. Once you have a foot in the education world, then it’s easier to carry on.”

Professor Singh had wanted to set up the scholarship for a number of years, but hadn’t found a suitable institution. “At RMIT I found there was a system in place. So if I want the scholarship in perpetuity, there is a process to ensure that the spirit behind the scholarship will be honoured. What also made me confident was that all the money that our family gives would be put towards the scholarship. It wouldn’t be eaten up in administration costs,” she says.

“It was a proud day when Professor Singh signed the agreement to establish the Inder Kaur Scholarship at RMIT. Both her sons, Aman and Sunil Bhar were present. Aman flew to Melbourne for the occasion – coming all the way from Malaysia. “It’s an important part of our family history and we needed to celebrate it,” says Professor Singh. “My mother had a passion for education. I thought this was a good way to honour her and her achievements.”

Establish your own scholarship
If you’d like more information about establishing scholarships at RMIT, contact the Development team on +61 3 9925 5220 or email giving@rmit.edu.au
Chemistry for me was a hobby when I was a teenager. I had a chemistry set, I liked working with my hands and doing experiments. My aim was to do chemistry at RMIT, finish a diploma and work for a chemical company. RMIT was valued by industry – graduates could start work on the first day because they were highly trained and skilled people. But I was inspired by all the new knowledge that I was gaining, I wanted to learn more. I continued my studies to do my Masters and then PhD, and then went to work in industry.

I met Josephine on a bus in Flinders Street. I was waiting at Flinders Street with my backpack to join a six-day camping tour to the Flinders Ranges. When the bus arrived Josephine was already on the bus. Instant chemistry!

Several years later I applied to join RMIT as a lecturer with the main responsibility to develop a polymer science program in the Chemistry Department. I enjoyed the academic environment. While I've been at RMIT, a long time now, I change my teaching and research objectives progressively. Now we have exceptional computer controlled instruments that provide precision measurement and advanced analysis capability. Having been here as a student, as a teacher and researcher, I thought it would be a good idea to fund students in the longer term to learn about science and technology. I can teach, and supervise postgraduate students, for a certain amount of time, but funding the scholarship is my way of supporting and encouraging students into the future.

I was elected onto the RMIT Council as the general staff representative. That was a very interesting time because the number of tertiary institutions was being reduced. So the Council went through a lot of torrid discussions about what was best for RMIT.

As Josephine Widdicombe, I enrolled in the Associate Diploma of Mathematics and Computer Science at RMIT, the only dedicated qualification in computer science in Melbourne at the time. To me, computer programming was problem solving. You'd submit your hand written instructions for your computer program to someone who would type it onto paper tape, and that would be fed into the computer. A day or so later you'd get your printout. If you'd done something wrong costing your instructions – left one character off – it was another whole day before it could be corrected again. It was a very slow process, but it was the cutting edge of technology then.

After a number of years working in industry, I returned to RMIT as Senior Programmer in the Administrative Systems Group, eventually becoming manager. Robert was already working here as a lecturer, but we were in different buildings, so we'd only see each other when we got home. People would say to me, there's a fellow over in chemistry by the name of Shanks, do you know him?

Robert has a life-long love of learning. He has always been a researcher, breaking new ground in his field. In 2002 he gathered together many of his publications, consolidated them with an explanation of their significance, and was awarded a Doctor of Science by thesis. That's really inspiring, I think. One of our children was also a student here, right through to PhD. He did computer science as well. So at one stage our family had every RMIT experience: the academic, the administrator and the student.

We'd long talked about creating a scholarship. Now our children are established, we thought, let's do it. There's so much pleasure to be had in seeing it underway. It is essential for Australia's future that we have people qualified to the doctorate level. I think investment in education is the finest investment that can be made.

Professor Robert Shanks and Josephine Shanks have seen some fascinating changes in the decades they have both studied and worked at RMIT. Here they share their memories of RMIT and tell why they chose to establish a scholarship to support PhD research in science, engineering and technology.
RMIT alumnus Silvia Tejedor has pledged a bequest that will support women studying engineering or science-based disciplines at RMIT.

When Silvia Tejedor enrolled in the Certificate of Technology in Electronics at RMIT in 1980, she was one of only two young women signing up for the course. By the time class started, Silvia was the only woman left in the course of over 100 students – at the time, it wasn’t a field many women chose to pursue.

Silvia arrived in Australia from Argentina in 1975, and while she found learning English at school challenging, she was ahead of the class in mathematics and science. “Mathematics, science and physics was always my passion,” she says, which drove her to study electronics.

Despite being the only female in class, she enjoyed studying at RMIT immensely. “The other people in the course were great – they were very thoughtful, very helpful, and so were the lecturers,” she says.

After graduating, Silvia got a job with the Department of Defence, where she still works as a Technical Officer in Electronics.

Silvia had long wanted to do something to encourage more women to follow a career in engineering and science. She read about another donor who created a scholarship in the RMIT Connect email, and decided to create a scholarship of her own, by leaving a bequest in her will.

Like Silvia, many donors choose to leave a gift to RMIT in their will, called a bequest. Bequests can fund scholarships, prizes, support research or campus development, depending on the wishes of the donor.

“I had a good experience at RMIT, and I do believe that you can progress well in life with a proper education. I know there are a lot of disadvantaged people out there who need that little bit of financial help with their education,” she says.

“Now I’m at a stage of my life where I’d like to contribute something towards RMIT, particularly to encourage girls to do electronics, science or engineering,” says Silvia.

“At the moment I don’t have the amount of money on hand to give to a scholarship, but I know when I die there will be some money which my husband and my children will inherit. So I made a bequest in my will to put aside a little of that money to create a scholarship.”

The scholarship is Silvia’s way of giving back to RMIT and to continue her legacy. “I did come from a poor background, and I made a better life thanks to the facilities, education and people here in Australia. So I want to give back. I think it’s very important that we all do that,” she says. “I hope my passion for education lives on. I hope whoever receives the scholarship or prize will then do the same for someone else too.”

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RMIT’s focus on technology will be important in the future of our society and economy, says RMIT’s Chancellor, Dr Ziggy Switkowski, whose background in science shaped his own career.

Tertiary education has been absolutely critical in my life. In fact, some of the happiest and most important periods of my life were as a student and then as a researcher here in Melbourne and overseas. My graduate training was in experimental nuclear astrophysics. From there I went to work in California during the latter stages of the manned lunar programs in the 1970s. It was an exhilarating period, and also a formative one. I’ve always believed that science matters, and that scientifically trained people have a leadership role in our community and a contribution to make in public policy. My career has examples of all of that.

At Telstra I was making decisions around the allocation of large amounts of money for capital spending and research. A background in science allows you to form views about the relative merits of different research and development projects. An ability to understand the business cases and the economic justifications does require a certain numerical and financial dexterity that often flows from a scientific background.

A couple of years ago, the National Academy of Engineering did a survey of the most transformative technologies of the 20th century. If you look at that list, which includes electrification, automobiles, telephony, computers, water distribution – you come to realise the central role of science and technology in society.

RMIT has its origins as a leading institute of technology. More recently we’ve expanded that vision to be a global university of technology and design. In my own experience, RMIT has deep capability in the areas of science, engineering and fundamental physics, and as a global university. I have a long association with RMIT – I’ve known past Chancellors and past Vice-Chancellors. I’ve observed, with a high degree of respect, the growing success of RMIT, its influence in the broader community and the significance of its alumni.

Increasingly, our society and our economy is going to be a knowledge-intensive one. We at RMIT have a distinctive role to play. RMIT offers both higher education programs along with TAFE programs. This delivers skills for trades that are fundamental to our communities, through to higher education, which provides for deeper intellectual pursuits that matter. Great universities typically are founded on the leadership of visionary people, and built with financial support from governments, institutions and individuals who value higher education, who are far sighted, and who wish to support a university that is consistent with their ideals and aspirations.

RMIT has benefited from that level of support. But RMIT continues to need that support to help deliver on its vision. Support comes in many forms. Financial support for scholarships, for programs, for physical facilities here and for overseas campuses, is much needed and much appreciated by RMIT.

Many people have been touched by their experience at RMIT, and have been transformed as a result of that association. My own experience is that the period when you are at university is a critical period in forming your character, as well as increasing the value of your contribution to society.

Dr Ziggy Switkowski is Chancellor, RMIT University. He is a chairman of Suncorp and Opera Australia and a non-executive director of listed companies Tabcorp, Oil Search and Lynas. He is the former chairman of the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, and a former chief executive officer of Telstra, Optus and Kodak (Australia). He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, and of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

INSIDE STORY
THREE RMIT LEADERS SHARE THEIR INSIGHTS INTO THE UNIVERSITY, ITS FUTURE, AND THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF DONORS IN EDUCATION.

Dr Ziggy Switkowski

Great universities typically are founded on the leadership of visionary people, and built with financial support from governments, institutions and individuals who value higher education.
Vietnam is a country undergoing rapid growth and broad social change. Professor Merilyn Liddell AM, President of RMIT Vietnam and Vice President of RMIT, gives her insights into how RMIT will seek to play an important role in the nation’s future.

RMIT is a global university and RMIT Vietnam is an important part of that. We are highly regarded on the international rankings for a number of reasons, including our presence in Vietnam. We are growing – soon we plan to have a PhD program up and running and we are increasing our research focus. The big picture long-term plan is to make sure RMIT is effective, viable and significant in the country for a long time to come. A conversation that made a great impression upon me was with the mother of one of our students. The mother had seen her daughter gain strength of purpose, critical thinking skills and confidence through her education at RMIT Vietnam. A lot of our young graduates are the same. They go out into the workplace, present themselves well, get to a level that they wouldn’t have otherwise expected, perform well, receive good feedback and proceed quite quickly. Some start their own businesses – they have an entrepreneurial outlook and now the skills to back it up. This makes their families very proud of them.

There are shortcomings in complementary medicine, like any other therapy. We need to look into effective and cost-effective health care with multiple options for the public, because not one therapy works for every patient with the same condition.

RMIT’s Professor Charlie Xue, Head of the School of Health Sciences, is a leading researcher in Chinese Medicine in Australia. Here he explains why RMIT’s evidence-based approach to complementary medicine is important for the future of health care.

There are many challenges in the existing health care system. The system is under a lot of pressure – the resources are limited, the demand has increased, the cost for managing age-related and chronic illnesses has escalated significantly over the last decade, and will continue to grow.

As a health care educator and researcher, my view is that we need to be pro-active in looking into what other options are available for patients, particularly those who have significant long-term suffering from a chronic illness. We should not discredit any therapy without thorough evaluation of its potential – we need to assess the benefit versus the risk.

Health care is an individual choice. The public spend millions and millions of dollars out-of-pocket on complementary medicine care in Australia – more than two thirds of the population use complementary medicine as part of their health care choices. Complementary medicine research has a relatively short history in Australia, and RMIT is taking a solid scientific, multidisciplinary, collaborative approach to these therapies. We need to look into effective and cost-effective health care with multiple options for the public, because not one therapy works for every patient with the same condition.

I have been a researcher for the last 17 years, focused on clinical studies. We work on determining scientific evidence for clinical practice in Chinese Medicine, particularly looking at effectiveness of therapies in chronic respiratory disease and pain management.

The RMIT School of Health Sciences is unique to any other school in Australia, because we’re the largest provider of complementary medicine education and research training. We lead the country by developing high quality multidisciplinary collaborative research projects in this field. This approach has been very fruitful, and some of these projects are now funded by grants from the National Health and Medical Research Council. There are shortcomings in complementary medicine, like any other health care practice. Due to the short history, research in this area is still in its infancy. That’s largely due to a few factors – there’s a lack of qualified people to do the research, there’s a lack of understanding about the importance of research in this area, and also it’s an area that is still in the early stages of establishing a strong research culture.

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Supporting Research

If you’d like to find out more about supporting research and innovation at RMIT, contact the Development team on +61 3 9925 5220 or email giving@rmit.edu.au.

Contributions from individual donors and other organisations that help advance health care research are hugely important to help these areas move forward. There’s a real opportunity to develop new therapies and provide scientific evidence-based complementary medicine therapies to benefit our community.

Professor Charlie Xue is a leading researcher in Chinese Medicine and complementary medicine in Australia and around the world. In 2011 he received the Vice-Chancellor’s Research Excellence Award. Among his many appointments, he is Inaugural Chair, Chinese Medicine Board of Australia; member, World Health Organisation Expert Advisory Panel for Traditional Medicine; and Director, WHO Collaborating Centre for Traditional Medicine, RMIT University. Professor Xue’s research has been supported by over $8 million research grants including six Australian National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Project Grants.
RMIT University began life as The Working Men’s College on the corner of La Trobe Street and Bowen Street, Melbourne in 1887 (pictured above). After the gold rush ended, Melbourne was in dire need of educated and skilled workers. Local philanthropist and grazier Francis Ormond pledged to donate £5,000 to build a college that would be accessible to ordinary people and teach industry-relevant skills. But he also threw down a challenge – his gift had to be matched.

*The Age* newspaper supported the challenge, and the people of Melbourne matched Ormond’s donation with smaller, individual gifts. The College began with 200 students who were taught applied skills relevant to trades. Within just two years there were 2,000 students.

In 1899 The Working Men’s College began offering full-time courses in engineering and applied science leading to diplomas. The name Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology was adopted in 1960, and was shortened to RMIT University in 1992, when status as a university was granted.

RMIT has grown into a global university of technology and design, with more than 74,000 students and over 280,000 alumni in 130 countries around the world. Founded on philanthropy, RMIT’s culture of giving continues today, through our community of generous donors who support the University’s vision by giving to scholarships, research and campus development.

Pictured above is RMIT’s Green Brain on the corner of La Trobe and Swanston Streets. The eye-catching canopy is designed by Ashton Raggatt McDougall (alumni of RMIT), the architects responsible for the award-winning redesign of neighbouring Storey Hall in 1995.

The University still has its heart in the city – the Melbourne City campus now occupies the block between Swanston and Russell Streets and new developments including the Swanston Street Academic Building and the Design Hub will soon add to the RMIT University quarter. Campuses further afield include Brunswick and Bundoora in Melbourne, a campus in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, and a growing campus in Hanoi, reflecting RMIT’s global growth.

It’s RMIT’s 125-year anniversary in June, and while much has changed since the University opened its doors in 1887, it has always stayed true to its origins.
RMIT’s Melbourne campus was a long way from the small town of Bright, where Jesse Rose grew up – 300 kilometres or four hours’ drive down the Hume Highway to be exact.

He was accepted into a five-year Civil Engineering and International Studies double degree right after finishing high school, which meant leaving his home town. “RMIT had a good reputation for practical engineering. I liked that, and the double degree with International Studies really made it my first choice,” he says.

It was a big move from Bright to Melbourne, and to support himself, Jesse studied the double degree program during the week and worked long hours in a café every Saturday and Sunday. “Studying and working like that is pretty draining. That’s one of the hardest things about study – coping with all these different stresses you’ve got.”

Thanks to good grades, he was then awarded a scholarship designed for disadvantaged and high-achieving students. “The scholarship made a huge difference. It took a lot of pressure off – there wasn’t the same worry having to maintain an intensive job, balanced with full-time study,” he says.

The scholarship gives me the support to focus on my studies, but also extracurricular activities, like my work with Engineers Without Borders.”

Engineers Without Borders was founded by RMIT graduate Daniel Almagor, who was also named RMIT’s Alumnus of the Year in 2009. Engineers Without Borders brings together engineering students, young graduates, and experienced engineers to help solve basic, small-scale engineering problems faced by people in developing countries.

Jesse joined the RMIT chapter of Engineers Without Borders, and is currently serving as President. “What attracted me to engineering, and to Engineers Without Borders, is that you can create something really tangible through the skills we learn here in the engineering degrees.”

Through Engineers Without Borders he found out about a unique project through RMIT’s Study Abroad program. In the third year of his course he travelled to Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam to take on an internship with an NGO called Habitat for Humanity, which builds houses for communities in need around the world.

“it certainly wasn’t a holiday,” he says of the experience. “I worked with other engineers from Engineers Without Borders to develop a building code for the different regions that Habitat for Humanity works in. Many regions in South Vietnam are prone to flooding and typhoons. So the code will give people a blueprint to build houses that are better designed and able to cope with weather extremes or natural disasters.”

Jesse was inspired by his experience in Vietnam, and plans to work as an engineer on international development projects after graduating. “In order to do that effectively, I plan to work here in Australia for a few years first. I want to hone my craft, and learn a little bit more about the technical side of my profession. In the long term I’d certainly like to be working in the international development sector,” he says.

It’s a direction he might not have discovered were it not for the scholarship. “The scholarship had more impact than just on me as an individual. It allowed me to go and do other things that help the community,” he says.
From decoding Gaudí's grand designs to researching ways to provide clean drinking water in developing countries, RMIT researchers are using technology and innovation to transform the future.

**In the footsteps of Gaudí**

RMIT’s Professor Mark Burry has spent three decades transforming one of Spain’s most intriguing and ambitious landmarks: the Sagrada Família.

Acclaimed architect Antoni Gaudí began work on the cathedral, in 1883 (incidentally, four years before RMIT was founded as The Working Men’s College in Melbourne). When he died in 1926, only a small fraction of the project was complete. All Gaudí’s drawings were subsequently burnt and his elaborate scale models smashed in the Spanish Civil War in the late 1930s. Professor Mark Burry became involved in the Sagrada Família project on a research trip to Barcelona in 1979 when, through extraordinary luck, he interviewed two of Gaudí’s colleagues, both aged in their late 80s, who described the geometric secrets within the remaining models.

Now, as Executive Architect and Researcher for the Sagrada Família, Professor Burry and his team use aeronautical design software to faithfully interpret Gaudí’s vision, translating the basilica’s complicated curves into computer models that can easily be interpreted by stonemasons on the ground in Barcelona. He has spent more than 30 years working on the project, which is projected to be completed in 2026. Professor Burry is also the Director of RMIT’s Spatial Information Architecture Laboratory (SIAL).

**Sustainability and climate change**

Concrete may be a ubiquitous building material, but it also accounts for up to eight per cent of humanity-generated carbon dioxide. RMIT researchers are working out how to make a more sustainable concrete, using a lower impact compound called fly ash. The researchers are investigating just how much fly ash can be used to produce concrete that still retains its construction integrity, while reducing the amount of CO₂ produced.

**The future of cities**

Around 50 per cent of the world’s threatened species and 40 per cent of endangered ecosystems are found in urban fringe zones. RMIT’s Professor Michael Guionton is researching peri-urban (peripheral non-urban) areas which include many of these threatened species and ecosystems, investigating population development and natural resources use, to discover the trends, drivers and pressures on peri-urban areas.

**Improving health and lifestyle**

A leading US research and lobby group has invested $500,000 in multiple sclerosis (MS) research at RMIT University’s Health Innovation Research Institute. RMIT’s Dr Steven Petratos will investigate ways to block the molecules which cause nerve fibre degeneration, with the hope that the research will lead to new treatments that may limit neurological decline in MS.

**Smart technology solutions**

RMIT researchers are working on developing cheap, portable water purifiers using nanocomposite clays so clean drinking water can become a reality in communities where it is needed most. A Joint Research Centre established by RMIT and the Indian Institute of Chemical Technology will research new technologies for water treatment, renewable energy and air pollution control. Nanocomposite clays can be used to make pots that purify dirty groundwater and make it safe to drink.

**SUPPORTING RESEARCH**

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**Building our future**

YOUR DONATIONS TO RMIT

www.rmit.edu.au/giving
When you donate to RMIT University, your funds are managed by the RMIT Foundation. The Foundation is the custodian and steward of funds donated, endowed or bequested to RMIT. RMIT Foundation funds a wide range of scholarships and programs that help students to support or enhance their studies. There are over 80 separate endowments established by generous donors, from merit-based prizes, research support for doctoral students, to mobility scholarships that enable students to study part of their program overseas. The Foundation reports to the RMIT Council and is audited annually by the Auditor General of Victoria. The Trustees are bound by the Trust Deed of the Foundation, the Trust Act of Victoria 1958 and by common law to ensure that once a donation has been accepted, the funds are distributed in accordance with the donors’ instructions and wishes. Such instructions may be in the form of a gift deed, a will, or other written instruction. The RMIT Foundation has a policy framework that is designed to ensure that funds are distributed in accordance with the wishes of the donor and that the real value of endowed funds is protected against inflation. Where earnings allow, the Board of Trustees of the RMIT Foundation adheres to a policy of reinvesting a portion of the endowment’s earnings back into the fund capital in order to maintain the real value of the endowment. Earnings over and above that requirement are then made available for disbursement according to the donor agreements. Both RMIT University and The RMIT University Foundation have Deductible Gift Recipient status with the Australian Tax Office and all donations over $2 in Australia are tax deductible. There are no fees or administrative costs taken from gifts to the RMIT Foundation – 100% of each gift goes directly to its allocated recipient.

Your donation helps RMIT University provide education, research and innovation opportunities that are life-changing for students, and transformative for communities both locally and globally. By giving to RMIT, you help create opportunity that reaches far beyond geographical borders, that will shape the future for generations to come.

You can help TRANSFORM THE FUTURE.

It was donors like you who helped establish RMIT, and who will help build its future—we deeply value your support.

Your donation helps RMIT University provide education, research and innovation opportunities that are life-changing for students, and transformative for communities both locally and globally.

You can continue this legacy by giving again to RMIT.

If you would like to give further, please visit us online at www.rmit.edu.au/giving, or call us on +61 3 9925 5220.

Cheques can be made payable to RMIT Foundation and sent to: RMIT University, GPO Box 2476, Melbourne VIC 3001. 100% of your gift goes directly to education at RMIT—there are no administration costs deducted from your gift—and gifts over $2 are fully tax deductible in Australia. Thank you for your support.

MORE INFORMATION
Further information on RMIT Foundation is available in RMIT’s Annual Report. For a copy of the report, please contact the Development office on +61 3 9925 5220, or email giving@rmit.edu.au

The RMIT Foundation 2011. Front row, left to right: Emeritus Professor Brian Smith AO (Chair), Ms Virginia Rogers, Dr Walter Uhlenbruch AO, Ms Rosemary Lever. Second row, left to right: Mr Jonathan Hamer, Ms Janet Latchford, Mr Ian George. Back row, left to right: Dr Julie Wells (Secretary), Mr Steve Somogyi. Foundation members Dr Ziggy Switkowski, Mr Christopher van Aanholt, Dr Peter Jonson are not present in the photo.
RMIT University values each and every one of our donors who support the University. We thank everyone who supported the University in 2011, and to those who have committed ongoing support through endowments and bequests.

Please note some donors choose to remain anonymous and are not included on this list. Every effort has been made to ensure this list includes all other donors to RMIT University for 2011. If you notice an error or omission in the list, please contact us on +61 3 9925 5220 or email giving@rmit.edu.au