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Welcome to the latest Go8 newsletter.

When deciding on content I stepped back and realised the amazing diversity of the work we have been doing at the Go8 in the past few months, and its excitement because of what it can provide for our students and the nation's economy.

Two priorities for the Go8 have been equity and China, and I am sure the newsletter content on both those areas will be of interest, and relevant to what I have written above.

Equity has always been a focus for the Go8, and we have a plethora of scholarships and successful programs, but, we don't shy away from the fact that what we deliver is far from enough, and that there is much more to be done, internally and externally. We cannot waste time. We must achieve the necessary outcomes.

This brings us to a very outcomes-focused agreement that was signed last month between the Go8 and ACOSS, one with a focus on low SES students in our outer metropolitan suburbs, and students from the bush.

We are delighted that ACOSS has seen value in the Go8 working with it, and given that we already seem to be entering into a Federal Election countdown, there is no time to be lost in driving joint equity policy agendas with the Government and Opposition.

Both the ACOSS Chief Executive Dr Cassandra Goldie and I come to this agreement with personal understanding and experience of barriers to university study. I wear with pride that I was not only a first-in-family student but first-ever from the Fremantle street where I grew up.

Cassandra tells how she was adopted, with much sadness, because her birth mother knew she could never afford to give her an education while an adoptive family could. Cassandra grew up to receive her PhD. This commitment to equity from personal experience helps drive a very determined energy from both organisations to achieve outcomes.

Equity is further echoed in the interview we publish with our Go8 Deputy Chair, Professor Dawn Freshwater who is the Vice Chancellor at the University of Western Australia (UWA). Professor Freshwater left school in the UK at 15 to join the workforce because of family circumstances, and therefore without her A levels.

As the interview says, Professor Freshwater’s poignant story illustrates the conquering force of an excellent tertiary education in changing a person’s life, as she rose to become the Vice Chancellor of a world-class university. It’s a fascinating story of equity and personal drive from someone who left school not even knowing “I had a brain”. Professor Freshwater’s commitment to equity shines through.

China has been the other main focus of the Go8 in recent months. The Go8’s clear message has always been, and continues to be, that we are proud to be home to some 60 per cent of the Chinese students who choose Australia as a study destination, and we very much value our Chinese PhD students and their research contribution.

The Go8 has made it clear publicly that our role is delivering quality students a quality education; not politics, and Go8 Chair and Vice Chancellor of UNSW Sydney, Professor Ian Jacobs reiterated this in interviews with Chinese media in Beijing. Our Vice Chancellors had been pleased to be invited to China in May to attend the 120th Birthday celebrations of Peking University. Those prestigious celebrations of a great university attracted the presence of VCs from all of the world’s leading universities.

The Go8 also directly set up a series of meetings to coincide with the celebrations and we had welcoming and productive meetings with the Presidents of Peking University, Xi’an Jiao Tong University and Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

Two priorities for the Go8 have been equity and China, and I am sure the newsletter content on both those areas will be of interest, and relevant to what I have written above.
At the same time the Go8 sought and was granted equally productive and collegial meetings with senior leadership of the Chinese Ministry of Education and Mr Sheng Jianxue, Secretary General of the China Scholarship Council.

Our focus on equity and our ongoing agreements within China, plus new agreements suggested by the Ministry of Education, mean we have much to keep us busy over coming months.

I have left comment on the Federal Budget until last. It always feels like groundhog day with Universities seen as a cost rather than as an investment that delivers a very high ROI.

Yes the Budget included some much-needed forward certainty for research, but it seems that for our sector what one hand delivers the other taketh away as we find ourselves facing being charged what can only be described as a tax levied against a university for enrolling HELP students. I will leave you with two thoughts on this – would Government charge doctors a fee for every patient they see? Does this Federal Government really want to impose on universities an impediment much like the much derided State-based payroll tax? It is a badly disguised funding cut yet again.

**Our Vice Chancellors had been pleased to be invited to China in May to attend the 120th Birthday celebrations of Peking University. Those prestigious celebrations of a great university attracted the presence of VCs from all of the world’s leading universities.**
Go8 has positive visit to China

The Go8 Vice Chancellors and the Go8 Chief Executive were honoured to receive personal invites to the prestigious program of events surrounding the 120th birthday of Peking University in Beijing in May.

The events were attended by Vice Chancellors and their teams from the world’s leading universities. The United States and the UK were well represented, and the Go8 which has seven of its members ranked in the world’s top 100, had five vice chancellors and its Chief Executive there.

Following a day of formal birthday celebrations the Vice Chancellors took part in the “World University Presidents Symposium & Beijing Forum 2018”.

Four Go8 Vice Chancellors were invited to speak in the day’s program.

The Go8 also used its time in China to meet with the Presidents of three Chinese universities with which it has forged strong links, and with senior officials of China’s Ministry of Education and the China Scholarship Council.

The Go8 was pleased to find the welcome in China warm and productive. There was a keenness to strengthen existing relationships, and to forge new research alliances.

The Go8 was also invited to a private dinner hosted by Australia’s Ambassador to China, Her Excellency Jan Adams.
The Go8 also used its time in China to meet with the Presidents of three Chinese universities with which it has forged strong links, and with senior officials of China’s Ministry of Education and the China Scholarship Council.
The University of Western Australia has welcomed a tenacious Vice Chancellor

The Go8’s deputy Chair – and its 2019 Chair – Professor Dawn Freshwater, is the 18th Vice Chancellor of the University of Western Australia (UWA).

Professor Freshwater arrived in Perth late in 2014 to take up the position of UWA’s Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor: “I interviewed, was offered the position later that day as I was heading back to the airport. I said yes immediately”.

She was soon engaged in a roots and branch organisational and cultural restructure. When the then UWA Vice Chancellor Professor Paul Johnson resigned in 2016 Professor Freshwater became acting VC, and in April 2017 she was announced as the next VC – giving her both the responsibility and authority to develop and implement her widespread strategic vision.

The “new look” for UWA is being watched with interest by the Perth political and media fraternities. Curtin University aims to nip at UWA’s heels in a city where University competition for students – undergraduate and post graduate, domestic and international – and research funding, in particular that which partners with industry, is fierce.

The competitive environment Professor Freshwater is leading within, and the vast changes she is implementing, make her back-story all that more fascinating. Some of her closest colleagues at the university comment that all the discipline and stamina that can be attributed to her success as a marathon runner is being put to good use as a ‘transformative VC’ in Perth.

Go8 universities are Australia’s leading research-intensive universities, and all highly ranked globally, with seven in the world’s top 100 universities. Professor Freshwater’s pathway from a 15-year-old without her A levels, to Vice Chancellor within the Go8, is therefore an exemplar for everyone who believes in the conquering force of excellent tertiary education, equity, and mentoring.

Juggling a job to support her own family, looking after her daughter and home, and finding time to study “became a way of life,” she says. “I did it. I found time to do it. I never considered that I could not do it, and I think that is part of the key to success. You get on and you do it, you don’t consider that you can’t. It’s down to hard work and a lot of commitment.”

Perception would suggest … that a Go8 University would not be home to a Vice Chancellor who left school at 15, but that is exactly what Professor Freshwater did, and was at work at 16.

She grew up in the UK midlands, and says she had no understanding that she did in fact even “have a brain”. “None”, she says, “certainly not when I left school. I had parents with multiple illnesses and I was the eldest child. My family situation meant I had to join the workforce, so I did when I could, and without completing my secondary education. Being ‘clever’, and understanding what I could achieve, was not something I was aware of at the time.”

Her chosen career was mental health nursing. That choice was to open her mind in more ways than one. First, she found aspiring peers were accepted because they already had A levels. “I was different. I had to first study and then pass an entrance exam before I could be considered.” It was an educational ‘them and us’ light-bulb moment; as was discovering that she could put her mind to serious study and pass exams well.

Within her chosen discipline, Professor Freshwater found reason to “find out more”...
through involvement where she could contribute to change and progress. Her career path has always been one of driving and embracing change. She became heavily involved in ways to improve mental health care in prisons, and in ways to reduce suicide in young males, two passions, and an expertise, that have stayed with her, and which have led to her being involved in advising on the development of a new prison in WA. She also found she could make the difficult decisions nursing demanded of her at a young age. But it wasn’t enough.

“I was young, and, also by then had a young family, but I was encouraged by those senior to me that I had more to give, and that tertiary education was my pathway. I undertook part-time under-graduate study which I saw as a way of advancing what I could do (to help others through research and program delivery) rather than what it could do for me,” she says.

Juggling a job to support her own family, looking after her daughter and home, and finding time to study “became a way of life,” she says. “I did it. I found time to do it. I never considered that I could not do it, and I think that is part of the key to success. You get on and you do it, you don’t consider that you can’t. It’s down to hard work and a lot of commitment.”

But she is frank in admitting that looking back she does wonder how she managed it. “It was
The University of Western Australia has welcomed a tenacious Vice Chancellor continued

squeezing every minute out of every day, and being very disciplined with time and concentration.”

Having completed her degree, she then was motivated to complete honours, while continuing the job, mother study balancing act. “Again, I have a lot to thank mentors for. My supervisors suggested my honours thesis would make a fantastic PhD study. It was a risk. It was more juggling but I have always been willing to take the risks that lead to the next step, such as moving from the UK to Perth in 2014, so I agreed to take on a PhD, and so continued the balancing act of family, job and study.”

research-intensive Universities that became known for their impact medical research, and was engaged in international collaborations, leading to development of NICE guidelines. This was the “ideal job” she says. A job she loved so much because of its focus on health outcomes, that she never considered leaving. But she was approached, out of the blue, to take a head of school role at the University of Leeds.

“Again a mentor encouraged me to ‘go for it’,” she says. “I had not understood that I had the capability to develop and drive strategy but others had seen that in me. Again it was a risk but I did find out at Leeds that I had been that closet strategist, and I loved it.”

That success led to being offered a Pro Vice Chancellor position – driving organisational effectiveness and the opportunity through that position to also sit on the Research Excellence Framework Panel for the UK’s Higher Education Funding Council. “And I had as a mentor a Vice Chancellor who really believed in me and worked to instill in me the belief that I too could one day be a VC.”

Then came the biggest risk of Professor Freshwater’s career. “When I was approached to apply for the Senior Deputy VC’s position in Perth Australia, the VC urged me to grasp the opportunity mainly, I have to be honest, as the training ground to return to a VC’s position in the UK at a Go8 level university.”

But as Professor Freshwater says, “I took the risk, I grasped the opportunity, but he was not to know that I would also fall for UWA, WA and Australia – and that fondness continued to grow.” She decided to remove her security net, selling her UK property rather than renting it out; leaving her flock of sheep on the Yorkshire Dales.

Now her daughter and grandchildren are also in Australia, and she has, as a current priority, the development and implementation the UWA’s decadal Vision 2030.

In January 2019 Professor Freshwater becomes Chair of the Go8 which represents Australia’s leading research-intensive universities. It’s a pinnacle appointment within a marathon career.

“It was never something I would have considered as a child that would be open to me. When I left school, I doubt I even knew about it. But education opens so much for an individual person, as it did for me, and communities around the world, it’s why I am so passionate about education.”

Professor Freshwater received her doctorate from the University of Nottingham in 1998.

“It was never something I would have considered as a child that would be open to me. When I left school, I doubt I even knew about it. But education opens so much for an individual person, as it did for me, and communities around the world, it’s why I am so passionate about education.”

work as an invaluable tool where universities can offer assistance and “do good, add value” to the community they are part of.

In the UK the doctorate enabled Professor Freshwater to lead research teams in
ACOSS and Go8: Working together to tackle equity

“It is too seldom recognised that a higher percentage of students from the bush study at a city university than at a regional university,” says Vicki Thomson Go8 Chief Executive. “We know living away from home costs are prohibitive for too many of them, and we need to work together with ACOSS to advocate for this to be changed at a Federal Government level,” she said.

“We also know that low SES students in metropolitan areas can face an uphill battle even considering study at a Go8 university, and that we must help those potential students. We know that if we can get them into our universities more of them graduate than from other universities but we know that is far from enough.

“We have to do more for both those potential student cohorts and so must Government. They can’t be forgotten in policy decisions. Losing what those students could contribute to the nation’s social and economic fabric is unacceptable.

The joint Go8/ACOSS work will be guided by a working group comprised of four representatives from each organisation.


The Go8 and the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) have signed an outcomes-focused three-year agreement to work together tackling equity.

The agreement provides ACOSS with $180,000 over the term of the agreement to assist it fund relevant work, and it also provides for access to Go8 research and researchers. The focus of the agreement is on the issues that make it difficult for many students from regional and remote areas, and low SES students in outer metropolitan areas, to undertake university study.

The agreement was signed at an equity round table at UNSW Sydney where more than 20 social advocacy experts including Dr Lisa O’Brien CEO, The Smith Family; Professor James (Jim) Barber representing Father Frank Brennan SJ AO, who is CEO Catholic Social Services; Dr Don Perlgut, CEO, Community Colleges Australia; Professor Mark Western, Director of the Institute for Social Science Research at the University of Queensland; Ms Wendy Cohen CEO of the Country Education Foundation of Australia and Richard Potok CEO, The Aurora Project (Indigenous) were in attendance.

The group spent two hours in full and frank discussion about barriers to university study — in particular at a Go8 university — and ways for every organisation present to work together to remove those barriers.

The agreement provides ACOSS with $180,000 ... to assist it fund relevant work ...
The relationship between social power and narcissism

Power does not turn everyone into a tyrant but, when given to those who want it most, it can inflate narcissism, according to new University of Melbourne research.

The research published in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* found that endowing people with social power inflates the socially-toxic component of narcissism called exploitation and entitlement.

University of Melbourne Associate Professor and lead researcher Nicole Mead said power has pernicious effects when it gets into the hands of those who want it most.

“When you give people social power, they start to feel a sense of entitlement – they expect and demand respect from others. They think they can play by their own rules,” said Associate Professor Mead, who is based at the Department of Management and Marketing in the Faculty of Business and Economics.

“This can be problematic in a workplace; powerholders become willing to exploit others to get what they want.”

Associate Professor Mead and her colleagues wanted to test the theory that positions of power may corrupt because they inflate narcissism.

Since not all people misuse their position of power, the researchers focused on testosterone as an attribute that may predispose people to the corrupting influence of structural power.

The researchers recruited 206 people. They took saliva samples from each participant and told them they were joining in a team dynamics study. Each person was asked to complete tasks framed as measures of leadership abilities.

All participants were told they achieved the best leadership score but only half of participants were told they would be “boss” of a group task. This meant they could control their subordinates and the rewards associated with the group task. The other half were told they had equal control over the same task.

Narcissism was assessed using the most commonly used measure of narcissism, the Narcissistic Personality Inventory. Corruption was measured with a scale that taps into people’s willingness to misuse their power.

The study showed that people with low baseline testosterone (taken from saliva samples) do not become narcissists when put in a position of power.

However, study participants with high testosterone, when bestowed with power, showed an increase in the exploitative-entitlement component of narcissism. This increase in turn explained their willingness to misuse their power.

“This work is the first to show that social power causes people to become more narcissistic. It suggests that the destructive effects of power are not due to feelings of superiority but rather the need to be treated as special and better by others,” said Associate Professor Mead.
A larger proportion of children and teens from disadvantaged families are being placed on antipsychotic medication than others in the same age group.

Social policy researcher Amy Kaim from the Robinson Research Institute at the University of Adelaide led the research which used data from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC), cross-matched with information from Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

“The preliminary findings indicate that a larger proportion of children and teens from disadvantaged families are being placed on antipsychotic medication than others in the general population,” Ms Kaim said.

“A larger proportion of children and teens taking the medication were boys, in lower-income families, with an unemployed primary caregiver, who were living in single-parent households. “Their parents were more likely to report that their child had behavioural difficulties and they were more likely to have repeated a grade in school and to have lower school achievement.

A new study has shown that Australian children and teens from disadvantaged families are more likely to be prescribed antipsychotic medication than others in the general population.

Key risk factors:
» Being in a family that was dealing with stressful life events or financial difficulties;
» Parenting practices in the family;
» If the parents themselves were in psychological distress.

“The risk factors were being a child or teen in a family that was dealing with stressful life events and financial difficulties,” she said.

“Other key risk factors include parenting practices in the family and whether parents themselves were in psychological distress.

“The social and emotional wellbeing of the individual child and their approach to learning could also compound those risks.”

Ms Kaim said the study would continue to monitor the children and teens’ medication use as they move through adolescence into adulthood.

“We hope that our study will contribute to a growing recognition of the need to look at the social factors which influence kids’ mental health, rather than resorting to antipsychotics for the treatment of behavioural problems in Australian children and adolescents.

The President of Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists Dr Kym Jenkins said: “This study is a strong reminder of the importance of considering social and psychological facts in particular in child and adolescent mental health.”

“The risk factors were being a child or teen in a family that was dealing with stressful life events and financial difficulties.”
The success of the Go8 – Westpac PhD student partnership

In December 2016, the Go8 and Westpac jointly announced Australia’s first program for Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) students with a STEM focus to have paid, part-time employment, while undertaking their PhD research at a Go8 university. The second student cohort, this time of nine students, was announced on 15 May 2018 after an even more hotly-contested selection process.

Go8 Chief Executive Vicki Thomson said the program was for the student who wants both a PhD and a fast-tracked business career. “It has enormous potential as a model for other employers who want a high return on investment from their young employees. Through this program the Go8 is not training specialists for niche roles in business, but instead business savvy graduates who have deep technical expertise with the ability to collaborate across disciplines,” she said.

The first cohort of eight students, chosen after a hotly-contested Westpac selection process, began the first of their two 24-month rotations within selected Westpac business units in February 2017. All have been successful.

“Through this program the Go8 is not training specialists for niche roles in business, but instead business savvy graduates who have deep technical expertise with the ability to collaborate across disciplines.”

“Somehow, I was able to get in, and it is the experience of a lifetime. It is the perfect situation to me. I don’t think I could have asked for more.”

Karina Mak
University of Sydney

Karina, an organisational psychologist, is currently in Westpac’s Group Audit business unit developing a framework for Risk Culture. She decided to embark on a PhD after honours, and after she had spent three years in the workforce. “I really craved the intellectual stimulation the study could bring, and it has,” she says. “It was the right decision.”

Her belief was, and remains, that having a PhD gives her the edge-for-life of a higher qualification, and a set of skills she can utilise, in either the private sector or academia. The opportunity to apply to work back in the workforce, and within Westpac, was the “amazing opportunity” she could not ignore.

She finds the Westpac work stimulating, and says she gets enormous satisfaction from being able to use what she has learnt “in theory in the workplace”. She has also concluded that her personality most probably would not suit an academic career pathway. The business sector has been the right choice.
Richard Winkler
UNSW Sydney

Richard, who specialises in materials science, is currently analysing new technologies for Westpac’s Information Security Strategic Portfolio. He says he recognised the value of a PhD within the private sector from “way back in” his undergraduate years.

At that time, he undertook a series of internships where he was exposed to senior managers in the private sector, each with PhDs. This experience defined his thinking about where he wanted to be post study, and the fact he was determined to progress to a PhD because of its value in the private sector.

Applying to work within Westpac felt to Richard like a natural progression, and he says he is experiencing a high level of job satisfaction. His clarity of career progression has helped – the business sector is where he most definitely wants to be.

He says Westpac enables him to use his PhD study holistically and he especially benefits from the ability to problem solve that his study has instilled. He also gains satisfaction from completing a defined body of work. “It’s where I want to be”.

Upul Senanayake
UNSW Sydney

Upul, who specialises in the global much-in-demand-area of machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI), recently received the Financial Services Institute of Australasia (FINSIA) ‘Technology and Innovation Young Professional of the Year’ award for the project he is completing for Westpac.

He knew, even from his early years as an undergraduate, that he was always going to compete a PhD and is on track to do so in April 2019. He fell in love with research as an undergraduate, and continued into a PhD allowing him to pursue his machine learning and AI “passion”. He did so, saying frankly that he was following a passion without seriously considering where a PhD would take him; either into academia or the private sector and a career in business.

He applied for a Westpac position because he was interested by the opportunity to take AI into finance “a good place” he says. Upul says being made to feel part of a team doing something very worthwhile at Westpac, and always receiving enthusiastic support, has enabled him to understand how enjoyable a career in the business sector can be.
A new study by The University of Western Australia and the University of British Columbia has found 437 million tonnes of fish worth an estimated $720 billion have been thrown overboard in the past 65 years globally by industrial fisheries using bottom trawls.

Bottom trawling captures fish through large nets that are dragged along the seabed by industrial vessels. The study, published in Fisheries Research, reveals bottom trawling generates the most fish losses.

Study co-author Professor Dirk Zeller, from UWA’s “School of Biological Sciences and the Sea Around Us – Indian Ocean”, said the huge waste of fish was due to the massive scale of bottom trawling involved and its lack of selectivity.

“Bottom trawl nets work by capturing everything, from deep-sea corals and sponges to perfectly good but unusable fish,” Professor Zeller said. “This is why a large amount of bottom trawl catch is thrown out and its lack of selectivity results in losses of non-targeted fish and a reduced value of the fish in markets worldwide.”

Professor Zeller said knowing how many fish each major type of fishing operation was removing, how much of that was brought to port, sold or used, and how much was discarded was crucial in evaluating the costs and benefits of fisheries.

… 437 million tonnes of fish worth an estimated $720 billion have been thrown overboard in the past 65 years …
“Small-scale fisheries use gillnets, traps, lines and hand tools and are responsible for only 23 per cent of the global catch – or approximately 1.3 billion tonnes in the past 65 years – but their catch is worth significantly more,” he said.

“By catching fewer quantities of higher-value species, such as crab and lobster, they actually made almost $260 billion.”

Tim Cashion, lead author of the study and researcher with the Sea Around Us initiative at the University of British Columbia, said industrial and artisanal (small-scale) fisheries had caught 5.6 billion tonnes of fish in the last six-and-a-half decades.

“Twenty-three per cent of that catch was captured by industrial bottom trawls, but industrial fisheries do not bring everything they catch to port,” Mr Cashion said. “During the period we studied, industrial fisheries threw out over 750 million tonnes of fish, and 60 per cent of that waste was due to bottom trawlers alone.

“Now we know with more certainty how much they are actually catching and landing, and how much of this they are discarding.”

The study highlights the importance of boosting well-managed artisanal fisheries, with the results showing that with very little infrastructure and support they already generated more value and less wastage of fish.

“During the period we studied, industrial fisheries threw out over 750 million tonnes of fish, and 60 per cent of that waste was due to bottom trawlers alone.”
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