



December 2007

## Flinders MoU with DEH

Collaborative research and education on conservation issues will be strengthened under a new Memorandum of Understanding signed by Flinders University, the Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH) and the Board of the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium.

Speaking at the launch on Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>, Professor Chris Marlin pointed out that there is an established and strong engagement by Flinders University individual researchers and groups with staff of the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium in a range of areas of DEH responsibility.

This research has spanned projects such as Mike Bull's work on the endangered Pygmy Bluetongue Lizard, Sonia Kleindorfer's work on nest predation of the birds of the Mt Lofty Ranges, Mark Lethbridge's work on the Yellow Footed Rock Wallaby, Rod Wells' work exploring the fossil megafauna of the world-renowned Naracoorte Caves and Molly Whalen's work on the systematics of arid zone plants and invasive blackberries.

"This new Memorandum of Understanding is a key vehicle for achieving an even more close collaborative relationship in the future. Our purpose is to create opportunities for co-operative ventures not only in research, but in areas such as facilities, appointments, strategic planning, marketing and postgraduate supervision", Prof Chris Marlin said.

Announcing the agreement, Minister for Environment and Conservation Gail Gago said, "This memorandum of understanding will help foster creativity and innovation in research and teaching about conservation issues".

Prof Marlin also pointed out that the name Bioknowledge reflects much more than biodiversity research to increase understanding of the natural environment. It is also about conveying that understanding to a wide audience – through documentary film, ecotourism and education.



*Celebrating greater collaboration at the Botanic Gardens (L to R), Duncan Mackay, Bioknowledge Research Leader, Chris Maher Bioknowledge RDO, Greg Leaman, Acting Chief Executive, DEH, Ian Little, Chair of the Botanic Gardens Board, Prof Chris Marlin, Acting Vice Chancellor, Steve Forbes, Director Science & Conservation DEH*

Examples of collaborative research and education that will be strengthened under the memorandum of understanding are:

- Research about conservation of migratory birds, led by Dr Sabine Dittmann from Flinders University and Russell Seaman from DEH;
- Honours and undergraduate students from Flinders University led by Dr Molly Whalen, undertaking research projects in the Seed Conservation Centre at the Adelaide Botanic Garden;
- Teaching about seed biology at Flinders University, led by Dr Phil Ainsley from DEH.



*Enjoying the opportunity to catch up at the launch were (L to R) Mark Lethbridge, Geoff Foulkes, Sabine Dittmann, Rod Wells, Greg Leaman, Andy Lowe and Sonia Kleindorfer*

Flinders University has made an increasing commitment over the past few years in developing partnerships with external agencies via MOU's like this one. We have precedents with ZoosSA, and the SA Museum as well as SARDI and we are confident that these partnerships will result in more high quality research and better outcomes for the environment and for South Australia.

### Research Devt. Support Funding

Bioknowledge offers internal grants for which only Bioknowledge members can apply.

**\$500 Grants** to seed collaborative research and writing initiatives.

**\$3,000 Grants** to enable members to hold up to two symposia or conferences

There are a limited number of grants available. Funding is allocated by the Steering Committee. Go to the Bioknowledge website to download an Application Form, or call Chris on 12528 for more details

## Welcomes and Farewells

Over the course of the past year, there have been a number of departures and new arrivals in the Bioknowledge Group.

Dr Don Driscill left Flinders to join the Fenner School at ANU. Don continues to be an associate member, however, and his collaborations will continue with Prof Mike Bull and Dr Sonia Kleindorfer and Meredith Henderson from DEH on the ARC Linkage Project on Spatial-dynamic models to identify optimal fire mosaics.

Prof David Catcheside retired early in 2007. David will continue as adjunct Professor in the School of Biology. He will use his retirement to pursue his research interests further, and to dedicate more time to his and Pam's work documenting the macrofungi of SA.

Dr Barbara Kameniar took up an appointment in early 2007 at Melbourne University. Her interest in teaching teachers to teach science and environmental sustainability will no doubt continue, as will her association with Bioknowledge.

Dr Gavin Prideaux has returned to Flinders University as an ARC Research Fellow. Gavin was one of Professor Well's Palaeontology students during the 1990s. Gavin based his PhD thesis work around fossil kangaroos from the Naracoorte Caves, and has continued to be involved since then, and while in WA, in research on the Nullarbor fossils, culminating most recently in the release of his landmark findings indicating that climate change did not cause megafaunal extinction.



Gavin Prideaux removes sediment from a kangaroo skull. Photograph courtesy of Clay Bryce/Western Australian Museum

## Bioknowledge to launch new Grant Writing Workshops for Post Graduate and Early Career Researchers

### Project Management and Research Grant Writing – four half day workshops

One of the most valuable skills in science is grant writing and post grad students are strongly encouraged to apply for grants to fund their research. The principles of good Project Design and Management and Project Budgeting are critical components in a strong Research Grant application – whether the target is a traditional funding body or an industry partner.

Based on an approach to developing project plans and writing grant applications that can be readily customised for a wide range of schemes, such as a PhD Research Program, a Research Grant Application, an Industry based Research Project, etc.

Through the course, participants develop:

- their competency in project planning
- their ability in writing proposals
- a system for effective project management.

Participants will leave the course with two written documents (draft research proposals), prepared in conjunction with their supervisor and/ or research colleagues, and which have been formally reviewed.

For 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year PhD students, their project idea can be their research project, which may already have commenced.

Final year PhDs are invited to bring an idea for a project that they would like to undertake in the future.

#### Dates:

The course will be run as a series of four half day workshops.

#### Tues March 11<sup>th</sup> Workshop 1

- Identifying Project partners and funding sources
- Project planning (scoping, scheduling and budgeting for projects)

#### Tues March 18<sup>th</sup> Workshop 2

- Project collaboration
- Risk assessment and contingency planning

#### Tues March 25<sup>th</sup> Workshop 3

- Intellectual Property issues
- Project communications
- Controlling, reporting and closing projects

#### Tues April 1<sup>st</sup> Workshop 4

- Project evaluation

All participants will be involved in formal review panels, through which each person's proposal is reviewed and constructive criticism is developed.

#### Tues April 15<sup>th</sup> Feedback and Mentoring – Prizes awarded

A prize of \$300 will awarded for the best proposal in each category. (1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> year, final year collaborative)

## BIOKNOWLEDGE SEMINAR PROGRAM 2008

Fri March 28	Dr Suzanne Miller, Director SA Museum
Fri April 11	Dr Liz Reed, Naracoorte Caves
Fri May 16	Dr Simon Habel, Head of Botanic Gardens
Fri June 20	Prof D. Lindenmayer, Forest wildlife mgt. & nature conservation ANU (TBC)
Fri Aug 8	Dr Mark Hutchinson, Herpetology, SA Museum
Fri Aug 22	Dr Alan Cooper, Australian Centre for Ancient DNA
Fri Sept 19	Dr Greg Johnston, Flinders/ ZoosSA
Fri Oct 17	Senator Penny Wong, Commth. Min for Climate Change & Water (TBC)
Fri Nov 7	Dr Mike Gardner, Flinders & DEH

All sessions are scheduled for 1-2pm – light lunch provided



Happy Holidays

From Flinders Bioknowledge

Photo courtesy Dr Sonia Kleindorfer

**We wish you all the best  
for the festive season and the New Year**

**with kind regards**

**Duncan Mackay, Mike Schwarz & Chris Maher**

**Flinders Bioknowledge**

<http://bioknowledge.flinders.edu.au/>