From the Vice-Chancellor

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the first edition of Circular, the newsletter of the Adelaide Benefactors Circle.

Philanthropy has been an integral part of the University of Adelaide, from its establishment 135 years ago until today. The Adelaide Benefactors Circle marks a new era in the relationship between the University of Adelaide and its supporters.

This is the first time we have officially recognised those friends, alumni and businesses whose generosity underpins the day-to-day operations of one of the country’s most vibrant and internationally recognised universities.

I hope that you, as members of the Circle, will benefit from developing a closer relationship with the University, and be able to take part in the special events and activities we plan to hold.

From the University’s perspective, it is gratifying to strengthen our community links and build long-term relationships with those people who have helped shape the University of Adelaide.

To all of the inaugural members of the Adelaide Benefactors Circle, let me offer our thanks for your generous and valued support.

I hope you enjoy this first edition.

JAMES A. McWHA
Vice-Chancellor and President

Adelaide Benefactors Circle

The Adelaide Benefactors Circle is a community of the University of Adelaide’s most generous benefactors who support and enrich the teaching, research and community service of the University. Major individual and corporate donors benefit from a unique relationship with the University, taking part in a number of special events aimed at celebrating and honouring those who make a difference for students, staff, and the broader community. Members also have the chance to meet with key University executives to learn first-hand of the University’s emerging challenges and accomplishments.

Sign of the times

The ABC logo is taken from an architectural motif of Bonython Hall, one of the University of Adelaide’s most recognisable heritage-listed buildings.

Completed in 1936, Bonython Hall is named after Sir John Langdon Bonython, who among many important public benefactions donated the funds needed for the University to build its great hall. The majestic gothic-styled building plays host to graduation ceremonies, conventions and major public events, as well as forming one of Adelaide’s most recognisable and well-loved public structures in the North Terrace cultural precinct.

Supporting the University of Adelaide means being part of a rich tradition of philanthropy, which has helped shape the city of Adelaide as well as the University’s world-class reputation for excellence in education and research.
ABC Launch

On Thursday 26 June 2008, Professor James A McWha, Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Adelaide welcomed more than 100 guests for the launch of the prestigious Adelaide Benefactors Circle. The inaugural event featured a certificate and ABC lapel pin presentation in Bonython Hall followed by a cocktail reception. Throughout the evening, Adelaide Benefactors Circle members had the opportunity to meet with University leaders, academic staff, students and fellow members.
In the last 10 years, Mutual Community’s support for the University has focused on students, research, and sponsorship for programs that promote healthy activity, including two Postgraduate Travel Grants and an Elite Athlete Scholarship for undergraduates. The insurance fund also offer discounted health plans for staff and University of Adelaide alumni, and is involved in special benefits through the Alumni Privilege Package.

Eric says that support for education is firmly tied to the company’s philosophy. “First and foremost we support the concept that there are two parts of our society which are the most important things: education and health. And without those things we don’t progress at all as a society.”

For Eric, philanthropy is a win-win situation for the whole University community – today’s students benefit by gaining an education; their research has the potential to reach the wider community in the future, and for corporations, it’s a smart move to align with one of the state’s largest employers and most prestigious institutions.

The mutually-beneficial relationship between corporations and the University is one that has developed greatly in recent years, he says.

“There has become a greater understanding of corporate connections at the University, whether you’re in philanthropy or whether you’re in a business relationship. This includes the opportunity to meet scholarship recipients, the company being recognised at public functions, and the chance to attend events with the Vice-Chancellor and other business people – all of which are really important.”

In his 11 years as State Manager for South Australia’s largest health insurer, Eric Granger has seen the relationship between the University and Mutual Community develop into one with far-reaching benefits – for students, researchers, university staff and alumni, as well as Mutual Community itself.

This broader connection – which goes beyond simple give and take – is a drawcard for the health insurer. “Many benefactors have the idea that it’s all about philanthropy and giving money away and not about being good corporate citizens,” he says. “But we live in a global village. So we support each other in our village, and that’s part of the process. There’s nothing wrong with getting a commercial benefit from being a benefactor.”

This approach is perhaps not surprising for a company that has a 70-year history of commitment to the community in which it operates. “Our roots are very deeply in South Australia and we’ve always been recognised as supporting the local community,” Eric says.

Mutual Benefits for University Community

A long-term supporter of the University of Adelaide, Mutual Community shares the University’s commitment to the student experience and belief in the reciprocal benefits of philanthropy. We talk to Mutual Community State Manager, Eric Granger, about the many-sided relationship between corporate donors and the University.

Emily Steele
2007 Mutual Community Travel Grant recipient

PHOTO CANDY GIBSON
Scholars’ dollars make a difference

More than 300 scholarship providers, recipients and their guests turned out to celebrate the difference that scholarships make to the lives of students at a special Scholarship Recognition Ceremony on Tuesday 28 April, 2009.

The inaugural event featured a certificate presentation in Bonython Hall and a reception, formally recognising the accomplishments of students and giving scholarship providers the chance to meet face-to-face with recipients.

Swimmer Matthew Cowdrey OAM, the most successful 2008 Paralympian, and University of Adelaide student, was guest speaker. Matthew is the inaugural recipient of the Sports Ambassador Scholarship. For many scholarship winners, the ceremony was the first opportunity they had to thank their scholarship providers — and for donors, it was an opportunity to see firsthand the difference that their support makes to the lives and careers of students.

In his address, Vice-Chancellor and President Professor James McWha highlighted the important role that scholarships play in students’ lives and their significance to the University of Adelaide.

“Scholarships provide support for those students who might otherwise be unable to take up a University place because of financial or educational disadvantage, or because they live in rural or remote regions. In awarding these scholarships, the University of Adelaide is able to continue our long tradition of attracting the best and brightest of students, regardless of their circumstances, and to help those students realise their ambitions to attend university,” he said.

Donor’s Gifts Keep on Giving

The University of Adelaide Endowment Fund provides for today, while keeping tomorrow’s needs in sight.

Since its establishment in 1874 the University of Adelaide has been among Australia’s leading universities. Its contribution to the wealth and wellbeing of South Australia and Australia, across all fields of endeavour, has been enormous.

The lifespan of a university is long-term – education will always be a priority in society, and the University’s first 135 years are just the beginning of an enduring public contribution. To provide for the needs of present students and staff, as well as those who will live and study at the University in the years to come, the University of Adelaide established an Endowment Fund.

The Fund provides medium-term capital growth as well as a stable annual income stream in perpetuity. Maximizing the rate of return, without taking undue risk, is the job of two separate professional fund managers – Mercer Investments and Macquarie Private Portfolio Management. Every year, 5% of the Fund’s income is used for research projects, prizes and scholarships across the University, with the capital retained for ongoing support. This means that today’s donors are not only supporting the present – their generosity leaves a legacy that will last for future generations.

For more information about the University of Adelaide Endowment Fund, please contact Robyn Brown, Director, Development and Alumni on (08) 8303 4994.