

From the editor

Youth brings with it a vibrant and earnest curiosity. From the motion of the planets to the poetry of the soul, there is an uncrushable zeal in young people to learn, argue and follow ideas wherever they might lead.

Age is not a necessary ingredient in discovery. At 24, astrophysicist Jocelyn Bell detected the cosmic murmurings that led to the discovery of pulsars. At 22, Charles Darwin voyaged off in the HMS *Beagle* to the Galápagos Islands where his observations would eventually lead to his theory of evolution.

Nor is advancement in age required to contribute new ideas or set off in fresh directions: in their 20s, Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein*, Jane Austen wrote *Pride and Prejudice* and Joseph Conrad began learning English—the language he would later craft into literary masterpieces like *Heart of Darkness*.

Just because undergraduates are young does not mean that their work should be underestimated. Great research can still come from beginners; seeing the world as it was, is and could be without affectation or pretence.

The student contributions that comprise this journal exemplify some of the best produced by inquiring ANU undergraduate students. The following articles have been selected through a competitive process as part of the ANU Student Research Conference or been highly commended and ranked in the top 10 per cent of global submissions to the Undergraduate Awards.

They are detailed, well-researched and articulate discussions about a wide range of fields and questions. You will find articles in these pages on everything from politics, technology and art to literature, biology, business and law. The diversity of the disciplines has also been reflected in some of the articles themselves, which reflect the ability of undergraduate students at ANU to combine their interests with intriguing results.

The authors of these articles should be rightly proud of their hard work and intellectual efforts. I wish them all the best for their future endeavours. No doubt some future biographer will hunt down this volume in search of the germs of subsequent greatness.

The toils of many went into preparing the seventh volume of the *ANU Undergraduate Research Journal*. I would like to express my particular thanks to Dr Dierdre Pearce, my team of assiduous subeditors, and ANU Press.

Daniel McKay
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