From the editor

When venturing into the depths of your regular library, scuttling between towering shelves of books and running your eyes over the spines in search of your intended tome, it is easy to lose sight of what is really in front of you.

Take a step back from the shelf, stand in the aisle and, for a moment, drink in the scale of what you see. Hundreds of books, thousands of authors, millions of words, and countless hours of intellectual labour, which together form a swelling cosmos of arguments and ideas.

The largest library in the world, the Library of Congress in the United States, is home to more than 160 million items. The British Library in London comes in at a close second. Combine all the libraries and collections found around the globe, and all the information now being stored in the digital cloud, and you begin to register the mind-boggling ambition of *homo sapiens* to discover, understand and imagine. Volume Eight of the *ANU Undergraduate Research Journal* is a humble addition to this vast corpus of human knowledge and endeavour.

The articles and reports in this journal have been selected through competitive processes as part of The Australian National University (ANU) Student Research Conference, or been highly commended and ranked in the top 10 per cent of global submissions to the international Undergraduate Awards. Some work that we would like to have included has already been published elsewhere.

Each article in its own way is remarkable: the product of many hours of research, writing, editing, proofreading, formatting and thought. As your eyes slip across even a single page, remember how much thought and choice has gone into each and every word built of ancient marks and squiggles so that they can sit in neatly arranged sentences, which together can illumine the thoughts of one person in the hearts and heads of others.

The scope and scale of the curiosity of ANU undergraduates is on full display in the range of the disciplines and topics featured in this journal: from a study of the bones of a fated Neanderthal to an evocation of colour and shape. Religion, education, law, science, philosophy and many other fields of inquiry have their moment in the sun. All the authors whose work appears in this journal can justly be proud of the fruits of their curiosity.
I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone whose labours contributed to the publication of this journal, and for the university in their continued support of undergraduate research. I would like to express my particular appreciation to our loyal copyeditor of many years Beth Battrick, our publisher ANU Press and my colleagues in the Student Experience and Career Development office.

Daniel McKay

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