The deadline for ARC-DP proposals conveniently corresponds with the start of semester one. And so, following two solid months of grant writing, March is the time of the year when academics reacquaint with their teaching duties. Despite some hiccups due to industrial action (see detailed report on the last page of GEO.news), and other minor glitches, the start of the new academic year went smoothly for our 500 undergraduate students, to which GEO.news extends a warm welcome.

An interesting analysis was published in the Issue 6 of the Occasional Paper Series, a fine publication (no official ERA ranking yet) from the Office of Australia’s Chief Scientist. In *Benchmarking Australian Science Performance*, one can learn that based on the average citation per paper, Earth and Planetary Sciences is one of only 3 disciplines in Australia that does punch well above its weight world wide. Locally, Nationally and Internationally Geosciences excel.


... and for an analysis of the analysis check this article from Prof. Crossley, Dean of Science at UNSW.


From Jody Webster our well informed GeoCoastal reporter:

This month the GeoCoastal Group hosted a 26-person delegation of Professors, graduate and undergrad students from the University of Tokyo. They had one day workshop of scientific presentations, a School tour and a session logging fossil reef cores. Everyone had a great time and no doubt it will lead to a more formal exchange program between our School and the University of Tokyo.

Jody with a group of attentive undergrads from the University of Tokyo.
IN THE NEWS THIS month

Seriously Newsworthy- From GEOnews insider Erin Smith. On Saturday 16th February, in a beautiful glade in the Royal National Park, a number of current and former Geosciences folk joined family and friends of Natalia Scurrah and Gary Lee to celebrate their marriage. Natalia and Gary met during their honours year in the School and have worked together in Southeast on a range of social justice issues. The wedding involved a unique combination of Australian-Korean-Peruvian elements and the abundance of food, drink and good music ensured that guests were happy and on the dance floor well into night. Congratulations Natalia and Gary!

In the Press

Dr Kurt Iveson, Co-Chair of the Sydney Alliance Transport Research Action Team, has had a piece published on ABC’s Drum website about transport in Western Sydney, to coincide with Prime Minister Julia Gillard’s visit out west. Check out the number of comments …
http://www.abc.net.au/unleashed/4557568.html … and visit Kurt’s blog …
http://citiesandcitizenship.blogspot.com.au

From our Earthbyte correspondent Dietmar Müller:
Congratulations to Nicky Wright for publishing her first paper – even before starting her Honours thesis - and in a respectable International journal too (Impact Factor ~3.9). Well done, Nicky, a record at least within EarthByte.

http://www.biogeosciences.net/10/1529/2013/bg10-1529-2013.html

A new record!

An Earthbyte paper made it onto the cover of the current issue of Computational Mechanics dedicated to the 2011 Symposium of the International Association for Boundary Element Methods (IABEM), held at the University of Brescia (Italy).


On the cover

Caught playing the metrics?

Who has the time these days to do their own critical literature review? Review papers are here to help. These papers allow both busy as well as lazy scientists to quickly and easily get up to speed on a subject. A characteristics of these review papers is that they attract a large number of citation to a tune inversely proportional to their intrinsic scientific value.

This month, two invited review papers have become available...
Bill on Ted !!!!??  Now, THIS has to be covered ... back to front ... so to speak. But don't get too overexcited, it is not what you think. A/Prof Bill Pritchard is amongst a small number of “Speaker & Performer” carefully handpicked by TEDx Sydney to inspire our fellow citizens at the Opera House on May 4th. Bill will talk about solving global food insecurity, one of the most challenging issues of the 21st century. You will remember that last month, in a groundbreaking piece of journalism, GEO.news revealed that Bill is a co-author of “Feeding India: Livelihoods, Entitlements and Capabilities”, to be published by Earthscan later this year. TED (for Technology, Entertainment & Design) is not an happy fellow, but a US based not-for-profit enterprise devoted to the propagation of Ideas Worth Spreading. And on the 4th of May, this is what Bill will spread on Ted.  
http://tedxsydney.com/site/speakerProfile.cfm?speaker=267

The first is about dynamic topography and was written by Nicolas Flament, Michael Gurnis and Dietmar Müller, at the invitation of Lithosphere, a journal from the Geological Society of America.

http://lithosphere.gsapubs.org/cgi/content/abstract/5/2/189

The second is about continental and oceanic core complexes and was written Donna Whitney, Christian Teyssier, Patrice Rey and Roger Buck, at the invitation of The Geological Society of America Bulletin. This paper is part of a series celebrating 125 years of the Geological Society of America.

http://gsabulletin.gsapubs.org/content/current

No rocket Science, but hey great for citation index. Too Smart!

Geosciences everywhere... Geosciences is being produced in some poorly explored corners of the University. In the Faculty of Education and Social work for instance A/Prof Osborne has just published a important paper on ancient karst.


News from the GeogSoc From our GEO.news journo Phil McMannus: The Geographical Society of NSW (GSNSW) has updated its Member in Profile webpage - the current profile is of Honorary Associate Professor Deirdre Dragovich.  If you go to http://www.geogsoc.org.au/site/index.cfm?display=288325 you can find out how Deirdre fist became interested in geography, and what are her current research interests.
While talking about the GSNSW website, check out Geography in the News at http://www.geogsoc.org.au/site/index.cfm?display=315235. There’s mention of work by a number of geographers at the University of Sydney, but clearly none of us was as good at geography as a certain ex-Minister - see the heading “Pretty good at geography”. It’s perhaps not the best advertisement for the discipline, but it is certainly geography in the news.

From GEO.news newshound Bob Fisher. Dr Jo Gillespie has been awarded a research grant from the Australian National Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The project, entitled Promoting a Human Rights Based Approach to Sustainable Conservation and Natural Resource Management in the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve, Cambodia, will investigate whether the application of a human rights-based approach (HRBA) can enhance sustainable conservation and natural resource management concomitant with respecting and supporting human rights. Congratulations Joe!

From GEO.news undercover agent Daniel Harrison. Three projects involving members of our School won seed funding from the Sydney Institute of Marine Science (SIMS) Foundation as part of the SIMS Sydney Harbour Research Program.

1/ The size-based pelagic ecosystem of Sydney Harbour, from eutrophication to fish. Research team: Suthers, Everett, De la Cruz, Harrison and Doblin
2/ Real time environmental monitoring in Sydney Harbour. Research team: Birch, Jones, Tanner, Harrison, Malhearn, Holmes, Roughan.
3/ Effects of contaminants on ecosystem function - micro-macro interaction. Research team: Gribben, Raftos, Birch, Campbell, Simpson, Freewater, Johnston, Hutchings

Brilliant!

Ana is leaving! 😞 ... to Norway 😞

Ana Gibbon, arrived in Australia on the 29th February 2003, to escape the Great Famine that struck Great Britain and continental Europe in the early days of the 21st century. With little knowledge of Australian’s customs and traditions, she ended up by mistake in our School, while looking for a warm place to spend the night. In exchange for food tickets and a small room in the basement, she was enrolled in a Master program in a discipline she knew little about. She grew stronger by the day, and before too long she completed a Master, a PhD and a Postdoc. It was written that the Earthbyte chapter of Ana’s destiny shall come to pass. Ana is off to take up a position at Statoil in Oslo, leaving behind only heart broken friends. All the best Ana!
Seriously Newsworthy - From GEO.news insider Erin Smith.
At Natalia and Gary’s wedding, Professor John Connell became a victim of the ‘seriously hazardous and violent’ Swedish game of Kubb. Or, perhaps, he asked his PhD student, who was on the opposing team at the time of the injury, one too many times for her thesis chapters??!
GEO.news wishes John a prompt recovery. In the meantime our midfield will be out of the soccer fields, a dramatic blow to our soccer team the Madsen Magic.

Conference
This month Dr Jody Webster attended the ANZIC IODP governing council meeting at James Cook University. He also gave an invited public lecture on results from the Great Barrier Reef IODP expedition.

PhD Submission
From GEO.news columnist Phil Hirsch. An impressive number of PhD students from the Mekong Group have submitted their PhD thesis. Congratulation to: Paula Brown, Nguyen Tuong Huy, Oulavanh Keovilignavong, Mattijs Smits, Kim Sean Somatra, Worawan and Sukraroek. Congratulation also to Laurence Troy who submitted his thesis a month ago.

Career move
Following her PhD on the Geography of Water Matters in the Ord Catchment, (Northern Australia), and a couple of years as a postdoc researcher in the Mekong Research Group, Dr Jessica McLean is now working as a Human Geography Lecturer at Macquarie University in the Department of Environment and Geography. All the best Jessica.

All Onboard
From GEO.news scribe Samantha Clarke. Dr Hubble is leading a team of scientists including postgraduates on the 3-week research voyage onboard Australia’s Marine National Facility research vessel the Southern Surveyor to study the seafloor along the continental shelf off the coast of South-East Queensland. The research looks at submarine erosion and landslides on the eastern seaboard. The team is investigating how often these slides have occurred in the past as well as trying to figure out what the potential triggers are. Bon voyage!

Good to know
The first Sunday of April (April 7th this year) is officially Geologist Day. Established by decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet in 1966, this well-deserved professional holiday marks the end of winter and beginning of preparation for summer field work. Luckily, scientists involved in fieldwork also consider this day as their professional holiday. A great news for all geographers.
IN THE NEWS THIS month

GEO.news is not afraid to speak up about the strike as censorship is not part of the vocabulary of our glorious University.

Report from GEO.news observers on the front line... Due to grossly misleading statements from *(#)%$ @$(@@_), and 2*#(*$# in breach of #(*$&(@#)$ and won’t be tolerat#($*#)#$ together united against the %#&Q@#$ front we will fight$(*(#@_$. Representatives of the &##?)(#*@( met with the >!#*(@#$&$ unfortunately ~@#( misleading$$@?<-- was expected. GEO.news want to make clear that as the result o $(@(!! noted that the “bullshi..”$" it has become imposs#$&@>< the action of police *(#)" regretabl$&#$.

NTEU Michael Thompson explaining why after a near strike-free decade, a line in the sand has been drawn.

A recruiting officer in front of the Madsen building working for the School of Geosciences. (Photo credit: USyd Greens on Campus)

NSW riot police shamelessly provoking peaceful Sydney Uni students.
Joyful teens enjoying a great learning experience (Photo credit: ABC-TV)

NTEU Peter Chen organizing a picket fence.

A young Christian enthusiast preaching the Gospel (Photo credit: Peter Rae).

Well that’s all from the GEO.news desk.
Until next time ...