

The University of South Australia, as part of the Mawson Lakes community, is very pleased to be able to participate in the Tour Down Under event not only as a team sponsor but also as a host to you this morning. This is the eighth Tour with 96 riders from 18 countries. Half a million spectators will watch the race, and countless more will view the race on TV. The Tour brings \$13M to the State – it is a big event! This is UniSA's sixth year of our Tour sponsorship – and over those years we have sought to increase the value of our connections with the Tour with other University activities.

This has not been difficult in principle or practice, as cycling is in keeping with our academic and research focus on sustainability and healthy lifestyles. Manifestly, cycling is a clean, green, and healthy activity, and a much more sustainable form of transport than most others, especially for short journeys. But knowing that does not immediately result in widespread conversion into a cycling community.

So as academic researchers we examine relevant issues. On Monday, UniSA convened its second Thinking on Two Wheels Conference in Adelaide. There were approximately 90 participants, including many non-academics, and about 30 papers presented, several from overseas. The presentations included reports on studies of the influence of cycling on travel behaviour, urban design, bicycle motion and cyclist performance, and the use of cycling as a context for teaching high school mathematics, cycle tourism, community attitudes, and many others. I was pleased to see our systems engineering centre, usually concerned with defence systems, reporting on a strategy for preparing teams for the Tour Down Under. Today's Australian Higher Education section has two excellent articles on the Conference.

UniSA has a research program on cycling. We have a scholarship for research into cycle tourism. We are taking a lead in research on the power of cycling in delivering benefits to personal health and recreational enjoyment and the importance of cycling to sustainable transportation.

Indeed UniSA has many research activities and projects that reflect the theme of sustainability. The Transport Systems Centre, now part of our new Institute for Sustainable Systems and Technologies has many years experience in sustainable transport in all its forms. This new institute brings together our researchers in renewable energy, transport, green manufacturing and applied mathematics. Their combined work over the years has included work on solar cars – many of you would know NED from the Solar Challenges – and more recently, TREV – the Two-seater Renewable Energy Vehicle essentially for commuting. This was featured in the Advertiser last week. The new institute – headquartered here - will provide us with a much stronger base for sustainable science and engineering over the coming years.

UniSA's School of Natural and Built Environments is also located here and its Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning program includes courses on sustainable development and environmental management. We expect that many of our future graduates will learn from the Mawson Lakes

development model and ensure that future new communities also reap the liveability benefits we are already experiencing.

The University has been proud to be a partner in the development of Mawson Lakes. The community partnership is now symbolised in many ways by the Mawson Centre. The Mawson Centre is innovative in that it has three owners, the University, Salisbury Council, and the SA Government – DECS. It is a Cultural and Community Learning and Information Centre and is a pivotal link between the town centre, the UniSA campus, the Mawson Lakes School and the Mawson Lakes development as a whole. The building itself encapsulates the broad concepts of integration, innovation, technology, environmental design and lifelong learning. The Mawson Centre was ranked as 17th in a recent list of Australian Landmark buildings.

Mawson Lakes itself is a cycling friendly community, and there are 26 kms of walking and bike trails. The development has also incorporated innovative recycled water management systems and solar photovoltaic energy is used in the lights around the lake. UniSA researchers have contributed to these sustainable systems.

The community will soon reap the benefits of another innovation, a new transport interchange, planned to open on 26 February, which will provide access to an improved public transport system of both buses and trains and a shuttle bus to link all services within Mawson Lakes. This will have a positive impact in reducing private vehicle traffic and subsequent air and noise pollution. It will also be of significant benefit to the many students who now commute to this campus.

The Mawson Lakes Campus is our northern metropolitan campus, and is situated in the south of what is a region of considerable social, economic and educational disadvantage. And therefore enormous opportunity. Three years ago we established UNAP – the University Northern Adelaide Partnership program – to enable the north Adelaide region to engage with more effectively with the whole of the university to improve educational outcomes and opportunities, assist with skills development and develop the environmental and cultural amenities.

There are too many projects developed under this program to mention, but I will acknowledge the critical support of the SA Government through its Office of the North, headed by Peter Sandeman, and the funding support of the federal Sustainable Regions project in the region, chaired by Mr Peter Smith. The UNAP program is led by Mike Elliot, and has won wide recognition as a model for university-community engagement. Within the university we know that these UNAP projects are making a difference and we are continuing to fund the UNAP program beyond its initial 3-year term.

A couple of days ago I was fortunate to be at the Tour Launch, and several of us heard Patrick Jonker talk about the UniSA team members. Clearly, once the race starts they are going to be far too busy – thinking on two wheels, one might say – strategizing their stage, category and tour

victories – to appreciate this new suburb of Mawson Lakes and the region, as they pedal north to Angaston. But I'm sure they and the other teams in the Tour Down Under should feel very much at home starting this Stage here in this blossoming, sustainable, bike-friendly environment.