

## **The Crawford Fund 2014 Parliamentary Conference**

*Leigh Ann Ackland, Katherine Ashley, Julia de Bruyn, Johanna Wong, David Coleman & Mardee Cassin*

Food insecurity, poverty and hunger were recently the topic of conversation with students from the Faculty of Veterinary Science and Faculty of Agriculture and the Environment representing the University of Sydney at the Crawford Fund's 2014 Parliamentary Conference '*Ethics, Efficiency and Food Security: Feeding the 9 Billion, Well*' in Canberra on August 26<sup>th</sup>. This annual event brought together Australian and international speakers to explore the many facets of food and nutrition security and respond to the challenge of meeting the demands of a growing population.

The parliamentary conference featured a wide and engaging list of speakers from around the world. Highlights of the program included an opening address by Professor Catherine Bertini, former Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Program, who emphasised the importance of supporting and engaging with women in efforts to improve nutrition. The audience also heard from Dr Shenggen Fan, Director General of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) who highlighted the high economic return of eliminating global hunger and malnutrition and suggested ways in which Australia could address these issues, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

The annual conference also marks the presentation of the Crawford Fund Medal. Established in 2010 to recognise people who have made a considerable and continued contribution to international agricultural research, the Crawford Fund Medal is awarded to those who have made and continue to make an enduring contribution to global food security. This year the Crawford Fund Medal was awarded to Associate Professor Robyn Alders AO for her contribution to improving food security and childhood nutrition, through her work with smallholder farmers in Africa and Asia. Congratulations Robyn, the award is well deserved and the University congratulates you on a significant achievement.

Four students from the University of Sydney received travel scholarships to attend the conference, as part of the Crawford Fund's efforts to encourage the involvement of young people in this sector. They were joined by three other students from the University of Sydney to participate in the Crawford Fund Young Scholar's Day at the National Library. The event extended opportunities for students to connect with peers and those further along in their careers, and included talks from Professor Catherine Bertini and Dr Nick Austin, CEO of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), on the value of agricultural research and international development.

Students also heard from scientists with extensive experience in this field and from members of Researchers in Agriculture for International Development (RAID), a new network aiming to build links between students and young researchers involved in international agricultural research. Among positive outcomes of the conference are plans for a Sydney branch of RAID, to continue transdisciplinary connections and engage other students in the food security debate. Stay tuned for more details about events on campus in the coming months!

Overall, the event was an engaging discussion of how to increase food production in an ethical and efficient way and an excellent opportunity for students to learn about opportunities to work in, with and for developing countries. The students would like to thank the Crawford Fund for the opportunity to attend their 2014 Parliamentary Conference '*Ethics, Efficiency and Food Security: Feeding the 9 Billion, Well*' and look forward to promoting the work of the Crawford Fund and engaging students from across the University on the issue of food and nutrition security and poverty alleviation.

*For more information please contact A/Prof Robyn Alders ([robyn.alders@sydney.edu.au](mailto:robyn.alders@sydney.edu.au)).*



Figure 1: University of Sydney participants in the Crawford Fund Conference.  
Front row LtoR: Johanna Wong, Mardee Cassin, Katherine Ashley;  
Back row LtoR: Julia de Bruyn, David Coleman, Leigh Ann Ackland, Robyn Alders and Helen Scott-Orr.



Figure 2: Julia de Bruyn (Student scholarship awardee), Robyn Alders (Crawford Fund Medalist) and Katherine Ashley (Student scholarship awardee)