

## **NParks Overseas Merit Awards**



**Photo of the awardees with Prof Richard Williams at the University of Queensland  
From left to right, Ham Lee Tyug, Genevie Chua and Mindy Loke**

### **Excerpt from Genevie Chua's reflection on her experiences in UQ**

Attending university with work experience does have its advantages; for me, I can better appreciate the learning objectives and their relevance to protected area management. The courses I have attended or am attending now have been useful, especially National Park Management, Principles and Practices of Interpretation and Principles of Wildlife Management. They help deepen my understanding of the complex management environment in which a protected area manager operate and the range of knowledge and skills that are needed in order to achieve effective management and conservation goals.

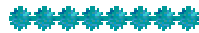
Apart from coursework, I am also looking forward to hands-on learning opportunities such as fieldtrips and volunteer works. During the mid-year holiday, I joined the university wildlife society for a fauna survey in a fragmented coastal forest near Hervey Bay. It was an exciting trip as I had close encounters with a few of the elusive mammals unique to Australia, such as the echidna and bandicoot. Currently, I am helping a master student to set up transects and pitfall traps for a survey of wild animals on a farm property. Having been more of a "plant person", I am looking forward to learning how to handle wild animals without causing undue distress to them and myself!



### **Excerpt from Mindy Loke's reflection on her experiences in UQ**

Cross-cultural education experience, interactive IT-based learning system and guided field based excursions had greatly enriched my study here in UQ. Working with a group of people from different cultures and personalities was a tough challenge for me as many had different opinions on the given topic. However, as time passed, we learnt how to cooperate and complement each other's strengths and weaknesses. On hindsight, this had effectively raised my communication competency and also broadened my circle of friends. The unique IT-based learning system in UQ made learning more interesting and convenient for me.

In addition, it enhanced my ability to use computers to retrieve, process and communicate information independently. The field trip which I had at Toowoomba Queens Park was fantastic. I gained a lot of park management related knowledge through interaction with the Park and Recreation Branch from the Toowoomba City Council. Also, the rich flora and fauna that the park had to offer was a spectacular view for both students and tourists. The UQ experience had indeed provided me a deeper understanding and appreciation of horticulture.



### **Excerpt from Ham Lee Tyug's reflection on her experiences in UQ**

Going back to school after working for quite some time, took me a while to adjust. The way the classes conducted here are similar to ours, though there are lots more reading to do here.

Gatton is a rural town largely surrounded by agriculture fields. Living here is different from living in the city and is a refreshing experience. The land is vast, it is very quiet most of the time and able to hear the wind howling outside while your window rattles, watching the bats flying over our house during the late summer evenings and viewing the stars from our front pouch.

This is my first time experiencing winter. It is cold and dry but still not too bad and in fact it is quite enjoyable if I am tightly wrap-up. It still amazes me when some of the people here are walking around in their t-shirt and shorts.





**Jacky Soh, Edwin Kang and Jenny Chua, Bachelor of Applied Science in Plants. *Recipients of the NParks Overseas Merit Award, Sponsored by the Loke Cheng-Kim Foundation***

**Excerpt from Jacky Soh, Edwin Kang and Jenny Chua on their experiences in UQ**

Experiences gained during our study at the University of Queensland, Australia, include the cultivation of knowledge and practical skills pertaining to horticulture, field trips that stretched over a span of three days, and state-of-the-art research facilities available for laboratory work.

There were also plenty of opportunities to work with internationally renowned researchers. Queensland has an abundance of fauna and flora, of which many are yet to be studied. We are truly impressed by how the Australians value their biodiversity and seek to conserve their subtropical rainforest despite the increasing pressure to develop land for urban use.

Conservation is not just a government policy; the locals have also shown huge interest in protecting their environment. This is seen in the active involvement of locals in the Rainforest Recovery Plan, which aims to protect and regenerate critical rainforest ecosystems throughout south-east Queensland.

