



The jacarandas are in full bloom on the Library Lawns – a clear indication that Wits students must start preparing for their year-end exams. It's been a wonderfully active time for Team Wits Australia as we hosted numerous alumni, including Mervyn King SC, Ari Mervis, and Captain Paul Luckin AM, at various events across Australia. We're always grateful to you, Witsies based in Australia, for the South African warmth and generosity that you bring to each encounter.

In this issue you can read about:

- **Ari Mervis**, Chairperson of McPherson's and former Wits RAG chairperson who shares how he developed personal power by practising humility, curiosity and keeping an open mind,
- **Dr Jenny Gray** who keeps the lions roaring at Zoos Victoria,
- **Prof. Chyrisse Heine**, a dually qualified speech pathologist and audiologist who remembers her Wits roots as she gives back in Cambodia,
- **Denise Scott Brown** who is headlining the 2023 Australian Architecture Conference taking place in Canberra, and
- LeapFrog Founder **Andy Kuper** who met both King Charles III and President Joe Biden.

Thank you, our Australian friends and alumni, for always holding Wits close to your heart. A special word of thanks goes to those who donate so generously to Wits – your support goes a long way!

*Witsies in Australia*

**Witsies making a difference in Australia**

Witsies across the globe are making a difference and Australia is no exception. You may cross paths with Wits graduates who have embarked on interesting careers - [Share your stories](#) with us!



## Adapting Leadership: Ari Mervis' Journey from Profits to Poly Crises

The role of big business may not change much when it comes to making profits, creating jobs, generating taxes, and advancing economies, but leaders will have to change if they are to be the kind of business people who can face up to the poly crises of the world and still be able to chart a path forward for their companies. For veteran businessman and professional company director **Ari Mervis**, the shift in gears means honing their skills to better anticipate, adapt and take appropriate action. It's also about making room for diverse skills sets and being comfortable that you don't know everything.

Ari is used to change and new environments - his career has seen him build teams from scratch in many countries, including Russia, Hong Kong, Australia and Eswatini. The chairman of McPherson's - who was also a one-time Wits RAG chairman - knows business like the back of his hand.

[Read more](#) about how he finds strength in diversity, about how he sees value beyond the income statement, and how he uses deep personal power to practice humility, curiosity and to keep an open mind.

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## A Zoo Wizard in Aus

**Dr Jenny Gray**, a Wits alumna with a Masters and PhD in ethics, resides in the tranquillity of Mount Macedon, in Melbourne. Leading Zoos Victoria in Australia, she uses her profound educational journey,

including degrees from Wits University, as a guiding force for her life's work.

Amidst the conversation, a kangaroo hops through her garden—a spontaneous symbol of her passion for wildlife. From the bustling cityscape of Johannesburg to her transformative role at Zoos Victoria, Jenny is a woman driven by ethics, who nurtures endangered species, and who advocates for a future where compassion and conservation intertwine.

[Read more](#) about this Wits luminary.



## A Witsie Brings Speech and Hearing to Cambodia's Rural Communities

Having a profession that gives you a chance to give back to society is a gift, but having two professions that can be put to service in this way is a treasure.

For [Professor Chyrisse Heine](#), being a dually qualified speech pathologist and audiologist has allowed her to build a career with a wide scope that has included research, lecturing, book editing, guiding the development of the two professions, and running a private practice in Melbourne.

A particular career achievement has been her volunteer work that brings sorely needed speech therapy and auditory services to rural communities in Cambodia. Here, she also helps the country develop programmes for speech pathology services. Since 2015, she and her colleagues have been able to help over 3 000 people. To give someone the gift of hearing, or hearing them speak for the very first time, has affirmed “communication as a human right” a goal for which she and her colleagues advocates.

Volunteering has given Chyrisse a different perspective on the world. She [explains](#) how her work in Cambodia and her roots in South Africa remind her that cultural sensitivity, diversity, histories and heritage matter, and that through better understanding, the world comes together a little more.

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Pic credit: [www.australianjewishnews.com](http://www.australianjewishnews.com)

## Wits Aus Alum Makes Royal Impact: US \$750m Climate Initiative Announced in Historic Meeting with King and President

It's not every day that a Wits-educated entrepreneur finds himself meeting both a King and a President to unveil an ambitious climate change initiative. However, **Dr Andrew "Andy" Kuper**, a successful Witsie, is far from ordinary.

With his inclusion on the 2022 Queen's Birthday Honours list last year, Andy, the co-founder and CEO of Australian-based LeapFrog Investments, had a historic encounter at Windsor Castle in July this year, where he announced an impressive \$750 million (R13.4 billion) **investment plan dedicated to combating climate change**.

## Book Review



## Denise Scott Brown: An Architectural Visionary and Educator

**Denise Scott Brown**, a Wits-educated distinguished architect, urban planner, theorist, writer and educator, has significantly shaped the world of architecture and planning. Her influential promotion of "messy vitality" has transformed our understanding of urban landscapes, spanning from the vibrant streets of Johannesburg to the dazzling spectacle of Las Vegas.

In honour of the 50th anniversary of her groundbreaking work *Learning from Las Vegas*, the anthology *Denise Scott Brown: In Other Eyes* offers an engrossing portrayal of her enduring legacy, featuring insights from esteemed architectural historians and practitioners. The anthology delves into her extensive educational journey across three continents and showcases her interdisciplinary teaching methods and innovative utilisation of urban patterns and dynamics as powerful tools in architectural design.

This collection serves as a testament to her lasting impact in the architectural sphere, solidifying Denise Scott Brown as a trailblazing figure in contemporary architecture and one of the most influential women architects on the global stage. Denise is the keynote speaker at the 2023 Australian Architecture Conference scheduled to take place from 29 to 31 October in Canberra.

[Click here to purchase her book.](#)

## Events

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Wits Australia experienced a vibrant period of engaging activities with esteemed alumni from Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane. At a distinguished boardroom lunch in Sydney, the eminent former Judge of the Supreme Court of South Africa and Chairman of the King Committee on Corporate Governance, Professor Mervyn King SC, shared insights into various facets of his illustrious life and career, including his roles as an Advocate (Barrister), Senior Counsel, and Judge of the Supreme Court of South Africa.

At a networking cocktail event in Brisbane, the guest of honour was Captain Dr Paul Luckin AM, who regaled guests with fascinating tales from his remarkable life on the frontlines of emergency medicine and rescue. Ari Mervis, Chairman of McPherson's Ltd and Non-Executive Director of Myer Ltd., shared his business odyssey — a journey that traversed diverse geographies, encompassing South Africa, Australia, and challenging territories such as Swaziland, Russia, and Hong Kong.



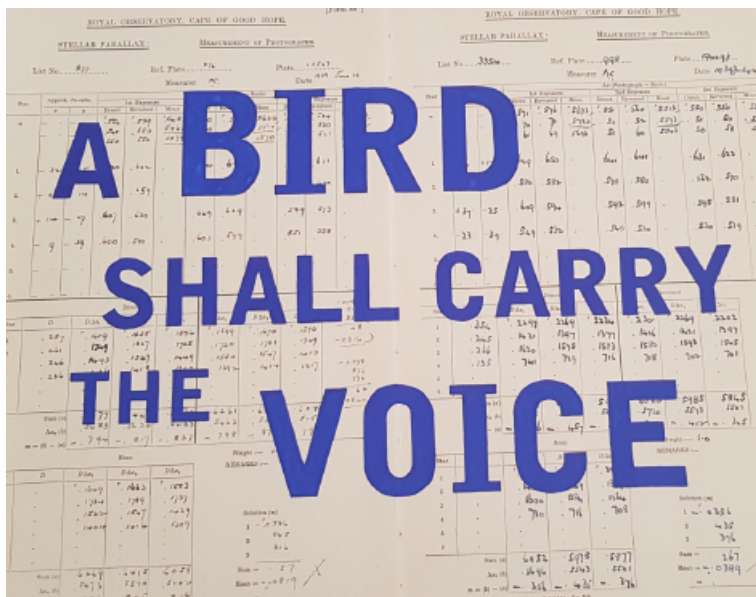
### 28th Greek Film Festival 2023

Looking ahead, Wits Australia takes immense pride in partnering with the Greek Festival of Sydney for the 28th Greek Film Festival, presenting the screening of "George Bizos Icon." This documentary beautifully captures the life and times of George Bizos, an esteemed alumnus. George, once a teenage refugee from Greece, rose to become a champion of Constitutionalism in South Africa, offering legal

counsel and forming a close bond with Nelson Mandela. The Sydney screening is scheduled for Sun 22nd October at 4pm, to be held at Palace Cinema, Norton Street, Leichhardt. [Click here](#) for more details. Additionally, the Melbourne screening is set for Wed 25th October at 6.00pm at Palace Cinema.

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## Kentridge: Oh to Believe in Another World



William Kentridge's African premier of Oh to Believe in Another World film which was accompanied by Shostakovich's Symphony No 10, and hosted by Wits University in celebration of its Centenary, was a magical evening that surpassed all our expectations. Wits University is immensely grateful for the support from William Kentridge and his team during our centennial anniversary.

An additional contribution from William Kentridge is the gift of the limited edition of 50 signed prints of A Bird Shall Carry The Voice from the variable original that was on display at the Wits Art Museum as part of the special exhibition. The proceeds from the sale of these digital prints will go towards the fees of 50 Wits art students, over 10 years.

By supporting this worthy cause, you will acquire an exceptional signed artwork by one of the world's greatest artists and help to change a life...for good.

[Purchase Now](#)

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## Empowering Dreams, Transforming Futures, Bridging the Gap



**Wits Australian Postgraduate Scholarships** totalling **R1,5 million**, managed by the **Wits Australian Board of Directors** awarded **ten students** an opportunity to fulfill their postgraduate dreams. These scholarships enable postgraduate scholars to make a lasting impact in their chosen fields. Your generosity possesses the remarkable power to transform lives. Every contribution, regardless of its size, sends an important message to these students – that they are not alone, that their dreams hold significance, and that their ambitions are worth pursuing.

By making a tax-deductible donation, you can ignite a brighter future, unlock the full potential of these scholars, and pave the way for a world of possibilities. Your support will make a difference in shaping tomorrow's leaders and changemakers.

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