WATER FOR A HEALTHY COUNTRY FLAGSHIP

ADVANCED MEMBRANE TECHNOLOGIES FOR WATER TREATMENT

FUNDING
The partnership will receive A$3.6 million from the CSIRO Collaboration Fund with partner contributions taking the total investment to A$7.6 million over three years.

The Advanced Membrane Technologies Research Cluster is working to develop the next generation of membrane technology to deliver Australia a safe and sustainable water resource.

IMPROVING MEMBRANE TECHNOLOGY
The increasing global concern over the limited supply of fresh water from conventional sources has led to great efforts towards the utilisation of alternative water sources.

Desalination of saline water (brackish water and seawater) has been considered as one of the most promising techniques as it can be applied to nearly any situation or location where saline water exists.

The Water for a Healthy Country Flagship established the Advanced Membrane Technologies for Water Treatment Research Cluster with the support of the National Research Flagship Collaboration Fund, through partnerships with:

- Victoria University, Australia
- Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Australia
- Monash University, Melbourne, Australia
- Murdoch University, Perth, Australia
- Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), Melbourne, Australia
- The University of Queensland, Australia
- University of Melbourne, Australia
- The University of New South Wales (UNSW), Sydney, Australia
- Deakin University, Victoria, Australia.

The aim is to develop the understandings that will deliver the next generation of desalination membrane technologies, vastly improving efficiencies and reducing desalination environmental impact and energy demands.

LEADING AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE
The Advanced Membrane Technologies for Water Treatment Research Cluster, led by Prof Stephen Gray from Victoria University, brings together scientists from the CSIRO and Australia’s leading Universities.

Mr Alan Gregory from CSIRO and Professor Stephen Gray, Victoria University.

The collaborative nature of the Cluster means Australia’s leading scientists in membrane research and development can together improve the fundamental understanding of membrane materials at both a microscopic and atomic level to better understand the way they interact with liquids and solids.

Building on this knowledge, our team will characterise and develop predictive computational models of the separation, fouling and transport processes occurring in inorganic and organic membranes.

The models will be added to existing information as we build the first national database of membrane technology information to improve collaboration and innovation of membrane separation systems or operating strategies.

The Cluster will be utilising nanotechnology, biomimetics and functional materials to deliver new innovations in membrane technology and cost-effective and highly efficient water recovery systems.
MEDIA RELEASE:
8 MAY 2007
HIGHER EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FUND

The Australian Government has made an unprecedented investment for the future of universities by establishing a new, perpetual Higher Education Endowment Fund (HEEF) with an initial investment of $5 billion from the 2006-07 Budget surplus.

The Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, said that income from the HEEF will be used to support capital works and research facilities.

“This investment will promote excellence, quality, and specialisation in Australian universities for years to come, helping our institutions to become truly world-class,” Minister Bishop said.

While $5 billion of the 2006-07 Budget surplus will initially be invested in the HEEF, the Government intends to make further contributions to the Fund from future surpluses. The Board of Guardians of the Future Fund will be responsible for investing the capital component to maximise the earnings available for distribution each year.

“The HEEF is expected to provide a dividend of around $900 million over three years from 2008-09, which will be distributed to universities by the Minister for Education, Science and Training taking into account the advice of an independent HEEF Board,” Minister Bishop said.

The HEEF Board would advise on the best strategic investment proposals which provide quality infrastructure and support Australian Government policy with respect to diversity, specialisation and responsiveness to labour market needs. The Board would take into consideration whether universities had been able to raise matching funds, for example from state or territory governments, industry, alumni or members of the public.

“The HEEF Board will have a chair and six members, with the Chief Scientist and the Secretary of the Department of Education, Science and Training participating in an ex-officio capacity. Members of the Board will be selected on the basis of their knowledge of the higher education sector. I will be calling on nominations from peak bodies in the sector,” Minister Bishop said.

The HEEF will also encourage philanthropic investment in the higher education sector, with the Australian public able to make tax-deductible donations.

ARC LINKAGE PROJECTS TO COMMENCE IN JULY 2007

We are pleased to announce that the following Linkage Projects have been funded by the ARC from 2007-2010.

- LP0776272: Dr S Liu; Dr JR Smith; Dr R Yi; Prof C Gallois; Prof PW Liesch; Ms SK Daly. The University of Queensland is the lead University.

Project Title: Through the eyes of the Chinese: Attitudes to and opinions of Australia and their influence on Sino-Australian business exchange.

Funding of $119,642 over 3 years.

Project Summary:
The outcomes of this research will have significant policy implications for the Australian government and business sectors in terms of improving intercultural understanding, facilitating bilateral trade, unlocking the potential of the Chinese market, as well as increasing economic efficiency. The capacity of Australian businesses to engage with China will be substantially improved by enhancing our knowledge base about the individual, social, and national factors that facilitate and inhibit engagement in Sino-Australian business relations and exchange. Findings from this research will also inform the international development in education and training, tourism and technology in Australia.

- LP0776730: A/Prof DK Kumar; Prof X Yu; A/Prof NM McLachlan; A/Prof RK Begg. RMIT is the lead University.

Project Title: Building a Smart Diagnostic System for Low Back Ailments.

Funding of $127,199 over 3 years.

Project Summary:
This research will develop an early back ailment diagnostic system that will reduce the recurrence of low back pain, and hence reduce the cost to the health system. This is significant to the community from prevention of pain, to the health care system that spends billions of dollars combating this modern day ailment and towards the industry where the low back pain is the single largest reason for sick leave in Australia. It will also give rise to employment of skilled technical people and an opportunity to increase high-value exports from Australia.

- LP0776456: Dr DA Greene; Dr EJ Bradshaw; A/Prof GA Naughton; A/Prof MB Andersen; Prof D Courteix; Mr MA Kinchington. The Australian Catholic University is the lead University.

Project Title: Tracking the musculoskeletal health and performance of talented adolescent female athletes.

Funding of $130,271 over 3 years.

BOOK LAUNCH:
SHIFT TO THE FUTURE

New technologies have changed our lives in startling ways and have meant that we do things very differently than in previous times. They have changed the very nature of what we can do, learn and communicate with others as well as enable us access to information and experts that were hitherto inaccessible or available only to the few.

In Shift to the Future Professor Nicola Yelland explores and provides examples of the ways in which new technologies can transform educational experiences for the children in our schools.

The book begins with a consideration of the Millennials – the students that are in our schools today who are fluent with new technologies and who use them deliberately and creatively every day of their lives. They are experiencing a world that is vastly different from that which we did. The book is based on the premise that we need to think of ways in which we can engage these students in learning and knowledge building so that they can participate as citizens of the 21st century in useful and productive ways.

Such a vision for education means that we need to still maintain essential skills that enable us to read, write, count and communicate but we need to go...
beyond this to ensure that our kids are able to think critically and constructively as well as provide opportunities for them to collaborate on authentic projects with others so that they are able to apply what they know in realistic contexts.

This vision also aligns with notions of equality of opportunity - so that we are able to ensure that all students have access to the benefits of new technologies.

In this book Nicola recognizes that even the youngest of children are exposed to new technologies and that this provides opportunities for us to interact with them in new dimensions. It is generally recognized that young children learn through play and in Chapter 3 we learn about the ways in which new technologies enable kids to learn in multimodal ways.

The book then considers contexts for new learning in numeracy and literacy in schools that were the basis of a number of empirical studies funded by the Australian Research Council. They are designed to show the exciting possibilities of working with children to extend the horizons of their learning. The view of learning taken is that children learn best when they feel a sense of belonging and connection with the material that they encounter. Such learning is dynamic and embedded in real world examples so that students are able to understand and apply what they know and share it with others. In this world teachers have an important and complex role to not only engage minds but to help their students to realize their potential in a range of contexts. This requires articulation of what constitutes ‘basic’ skills of the 21st century and a consideration of the ways in which schools and learning in them can be rejuvenated to re-engage students.

**Institute For Health and Diversity (IHD)**

The Vice Chancellor formally launched the formation of the Australian Community Centre for Diabetes at a function held in the Maribyrnong Boathouse. It was well attended with representatives from a number of Community Groups, the Western Bulldogs, Diabetes Australia, Western Health and the Western Region Health Centre and others. Many stakeholders have indicated a willingness to take an active ongoing role in the ACCD to drive a community and health organisation based initiative and to network to reduce the impact of diabetes in the West of Melbourne communities with or at risk of diabetes, at home, at work and at leisure.

**RQF UPDATE**

**DEST RQF panel members**

Nominations for DEST RQF panel members closed on 14 May. VU nominated eight candidates spread across the different panels. Due to the confidentiality request by DEST, the RQF steering group can not release the name of the candidates. DEST will announce the panel membership in September. Meanwhile, according to the DEST RQF April newsletter, DEST will call on the expertise of advisors as required for the panels. The recruitment of advisors will commence in the third quarter of 2007. As only limited members will be selected for each panel, advisors will fill in expertise gaps within each panel.

**Quality metrics**

DEST will shortly commence development of RQF quality metrics. The metrics will consist of three discipline-specific measures:

- ranked research outlets (eg. journals, books, performance venues and conferences)
- citation measures
- research income

The Research Evaluation and Policy Project (REPP) at ANU have been engaged as a consultant to coordinate the development of the quality metrics. DEST will be asking the universities to undertake a range of development work for this task soon.

**VU RQF panels**

At VU, twelve internal RQF leaders and deputies have been selected for each RQF panel, with the exception of clinical sciences and clinical psychology. Details of VU RQF leaders and deputies will be announced shortly.

**VU workshops**

Unfortunately there has been a delay in DEST releasing the RQF draft guidelines. As soon as they are released, we will arrange workshops accordingly.

If you have further questions, please contact Dr Ren Yi (4705) at Office for Research or other VU RQF Steering Committee members.

**INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND DIVERSITY (IHD)**

The Phoenix project team consisting of Research student representatives from Phoenix VU and the Phoenix branch in Beijing Jiaotong University (our MERP Partner University), applied for a prestigious international student competition and have now been selected in the top six teams internationally. Their student contest paper is to appear in the proceedings of the 2007 IEEE International Conference on Service Computing. [http://conferences.computer.org/ssc/2007/](http://conferences.computer.org/ssc/2007/). It has also been recommended for the best paper award. Congratulations to Paul Moynihan.

The postgraduate student team will be among the top six winners of the contest. The contest link (SOA Contest) can be found from the 2007 IEEE International Conference on Web Services, [http://ssc.servicescomputing.org/2007/](http://ssc.servicescomputing.org/2007/). The student contest awards (six of them) will be announced at the Salt Lake City, USA conference in July this year. The contest is amongst many top universities in the world. The contest submission is accompanied with a software demonstration. The event demonstrated Phoenix’s applied research strength and its capacity to tailor leading-edge research in support of the development of an industry specific application.

**AWARDS WON BY FACULTY OF BUSINESS & LAW RESEARCH STUDENTS**

We are very pleased to announce that the submission from VU has been recognised as one of two ‘Highly Commended’ Papers submitted to the IHTVC conference. Ahmed Shammoud, supervised by Dr. Susan Zeidan (Accounting and Finance) has been awarded US$ 250 for his paper ‘Ability of relational bonds to elicit loyalty behaviour: An investigation of the mediating role of emotions’. Congratulations!

Thank you to Manoj Sharma for moderating a presentation discussion forum on nutritional interventions in older populations.

Overall, the conference provided a valuable platform for graduate students to share their research and I hope that the concept of the conference will sustain for the coming years.

**2007 ASSOCIATION FOR APPLIED SPORT PSYCHOLOGY (AASP) DISSERTATION AWARD**

Congratulations to Dr Christopher Mesagno from Monash University on receiving this prestigious award. The award is one of the world’s most prestigious dissertation awards in the field of sport and exercise psychology. Chris will be receiving his award at the AASP Conference in Louisville, Kentucky on October 24-27. Dr Daryl Marchant was the principal supervisor and Professor Tony Morris was the co-supervisor, both from the School of Human Movement, Recreation and Performance.

**VU GRANT PREPARATION SUPPORT SCHEME (GPSS)**

These are small grants designed to assist researchers at VU to prepare applications for external research funding involving two or more institutions or extensive University collaboration with industry. Closing date: ANYTIME. Please visit the following website for the application form: [http://research/ordsite/vu_gpss.php](http://research/ordsite/vu_gpss.php)
CICGR RESEARCH: ASSESSING UNIVERSITY COUNCIL PERFORMANCE

CICGR received $57,000 from the Department of Education and Training to conduct a project on board assessment in universities in conjunction with a conference to showcase the results. The University Council Assessment Questionnaire was independently collated and assessed by our partners in the project, Evaluation Solutions.

The conference was most successful. Attendees represented all Victorian Universities, Universities of Notre Dame, Edith Cohen, and Tasmania. Guest speakers included the Minister, the Hon. Jacinta Allen, keynote speaker DVC Geoffrey Kiel from The University of Notre Dame Australia, Chancellors from Ballarat and Swinburne Universities and from OTTE. VU was well represented by the Vice Chancellor Professor Elizabeth Harman, and our Chancellor Justice Frank Vincent AO.

Papers can be accessed via our web site: http://www.staff.vu.edu.au/CICGRconferences/ and select University Governance: Managing Relationships. Those being transcribed will be listed as they become available.

UPCOMING VUECR 2007 SEMINAR:

Seminar to run from 5.30-7.30 pm.
Wine and cheese provided!

Tuesday, 31 July
‘VU Policies & Guidelines on Research’

RESEARCH STUDENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

OFFICE FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH:
UPCOMING WORKSHOPS IN JUNE

To register log onto:
http://www.vu.edu.au/PostgraduateTraining/

An overview of sessions can be found by clicking on the title of the session at this website. Places are limited. To avoid disappointment register now. Emails for registration will not be accepted.

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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Preparing a Literature Review</td>
<td>Mon 4/06/2007</td>
<td>10:00 AM To 12:00 PM</td>
<td>OPR 14 Geelong Rd, Footscray Park</td>
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<td>Turning into the discipline and finding your voice (part 1)</td>
<td>Tue 5/06/2007</td>
<td>10:00 AM To 12:00 PM</td>
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<td>Beyond the Post modern</td>
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<td>1985-present. The narrative turn; the death of the author, the birth of the reader.</td>
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<td>Practices of Successful Research Supervisors Session (2)</td>
<td>Fri 8/06/2007</td>
<td>10:00 AM To 12:00 PM</td>
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<td>Supervisory Relationships</td>
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<td>Turning into the discipline and finding your voice (part 2)</td>
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<td>Three crises and a new turn-Post-metaphysics</td>
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<td>Beginning to write when nothing to say-Turning thoughts and ideas into the language of the discipline</td>
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<td>Writing for scholars from non English speaking backgrounds (part 2)</td>
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<td>Other attempts</td>
<td>Wed 20/06/2007</td>
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UPCOMING GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

In 2007, the Don Chipp Foundation is seeking expressions of interest for small grants of up to $5,000 to investigate one of the following contemporary issues:

- Environmental sustainability and topics related to the social impact of global warming and climate change
- Protecting human rights
- Privatisation — costs and benefits
- Corporate governance and corporate responsibility — what does it entail?
- Needs of regional Australia
- Impact of government policies on family and work
- Education
- Animal welfare
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues
- The role of minor parties in the Australian Senate
- Other research area consistent with the mission and vision of the Don Chipp Foundation.

Up to four grants will be awarded this year. Closing date for applications with the Office for Research is 18 July 2007 and with the Foundation on 25 July 2007.

http://www.donchippfoundation.org.au

- Australia-India Strategic Research Fund (AISRF) applications will open on 6 August 2007, with the round closing 5pm (AEST) 28 September 2007. Last years AISRF applications are invited once a year and should be lodged online for 2007. The call for AISRF applications will open on 6 August 2007, with the round closing 5pm (AEST) 28 September 2007. Last years AISRF Programmes Guidelines (similar for 2007 according to DEST) are available at https://sciencegrants.dest.gov.au/AISRF/Pages/documents/ProgrammeGuidelines.htm
- The Australian Rotary Health Research Fund is calling for applications for Research Grants in mental illness. Closing date for applications with the Office for Research is 20 July 2007 and with the agency on 27 July 2007.

http://www.arhrf.org.au

THANK YOU: To all who contributed to the content of the Research Matters bulletin.