

ATN in PROFILE

BUILDING
PARTNERSHIPS

FINDING
SOLUTIONS



AUSTRALIAN TECHNOLOGY NETWORK OF UNIVERSITIES

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University of
South Australia

Curtin University
of Technology

RMIT University

University of
Technology,
Sydney

Queensland
University of
Technology

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Season's Greetings!

From the director...

It's that time of year again – sleigh bells are ringing, cheer is spreading, goodwill abounds, and vendors are doing their best to offload stock that they haven't been able to sell over the past 11 months. I trust that the past year has been as positive and productive for you as it has been for us.

2006 has continued to be dominated by the development by the Federal Government of the Research Quality Framework and on November 14, Federal Education Minister Julie Bishop released the Development Advisory Group's paper "The Recommended RQF" and announced the Government's endorsement of the RQF.

The ATN has played a significant role in the development of this framework, and whilst there is still some uncertainty in the critical area of funding, we have been successful in ensuring that, for the first time, both the quality and the impact of research undertaken in our universities will be measured.

The ATN strongly argued that research impact could be credibly defined, validated and assessed, and that the inclusion of both quality and impact in the RQF offered us the unique opportunity to position Australia as a leader in this important area. But it is not just the ATN which has argued this position – business has been a major stakeholder in this debate. The nation's peak business lobby, the Business Council of Australia (BCA), has also been a strong advocate for ensuring impact was part of the assessment process.

The BCA's Phil Clarke, who will speak at the ATN Conference in February 2007 (*see Page 2*) argued for two key priorities for the future RQF. First, it had to be capable of assessing both the quality and impact of research in Australia, and secondly, it had to make the successes of Australian researchers available in a transparent and useful way. We look forward to his view on "What Business wants from an RQF" when he presents at the ATN Conference in Sydney.



Australian
Technology
Network
Director
Vicki
Thomson

Another highlight of 2006 has been the development of our partnerships with our international partners, particularly in China and Europe and in 2007 the ATN will be looking to further build upon these critical relationships in key research areas.

A number of initiatives relating to health and wellbeing were undertaken in 2006 as part of the research work of the ATN Centre for Metabolic Fitness. These included the SA-based *Shape up for Life* project and the *Choose Health* project. Both involve research aimed at addressing obesity in our community.

The ATN's Centre for Metabolic Fitness is a prime example of research partnerships in action and 2007 will be an exciting year for the Centre as it further develops its research in the area of diet and lifestyle.

From the team at the ATN, we wish you a very Merry Christmas, our best wishes for the New Year, and our hope that the season is relaxing and refreshing for you.



Leading opinion makers to speak at ATN conference

Following the first ATN Conference some 10 years ago, the event has become increasingly more important for our member universities. In its inception, the event served primarily as an opportunity for members to network, build and strengthen the ties that have made us so successful.

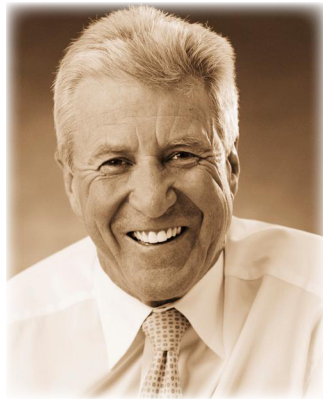
Since then, it has become a major event where the senior staff of ATN universities gather to consider and discuss developments and trends in the higher education sector and shape the strategic direction of the ATN and its members.

With that changed focus comes an increasing need for the ATN conference to look to external sources for input, so that the policies made at the event reflect true best practice across the sector.

In 2007, invited speakers for the conference will include Mr Phil Clark and Professor Richard Johnstone.

Phil Clark is a member of the JP Morgan Advisory Council, a former member of the Business Council of Australia (BCA) and was the BCA representative on the RQF Expert Advisory Group and RQF Development Advisory Group.

Former Managing Partner and CEO of Minter Ellison, Mr Clark is a highly respected industry voice and serves on a number of boards and advisory boards. The RQF will soon be a major factor in reshaping the way Australia measures and funds research undertaken by the higher education sector. With the ATN's strong focus on engagement with business and industry, we have strongly advocated the inclusion of impact measures into



■ Mr Phil Clark (above) and Professor Richard Johnstone will speak at the ATN conference in February 2007.

the RQF, a move which has also been lauded by representative bodies such as BCA. Speaking on "What Business wants from the RQF", Mr Clark will provide an invaluable industry perspective to the conference, where research and the RQF will be major themes in 2007.

Richard Johnstone is the Executive Director of the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, a post he had held since November 2005. The Carrick Institute was established by the Commonwealth Government to oversee a series of programs, including Awards and Grants schemes, designed to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in Australian higher education.

Since 2001 Professor Johnstone has been a member and Deputy Chair of the Board of Graduate Careers Australia, the body that is responsible for the national Course Experience Questionnaire. He has



been awarded the Centenary Medal for his contribution to teaching and learning in Australian higher education. The recent Learning and Teaching Performance Fund (LTPF) has brought into focus Australian universities' performance in this core area of their business.

While the methodology and results of the first LTPF were widely questioned across the sector, it drew attention to current practices and the way in which they are measured.

Likewise, university ranking systems are becoming increasingly important as benchmarks for students seeking to make a choice about which institution to attend.

Professor Johnstone will be speaking and participating in a panel discussion that will discuss the place of teaching and learning measures in ranking systems, as well as rankings associated with the LTPF.

■ For more information visit the ATN web site at www.atn.edu.au

e-Grad School launching Graduate Certificate in Research Commercialisation

The ATN e-Grad School (Australia), an ambitious joint venture funded by the first round of the Collaboration and Structural Reform Fund (CASR) in 2005, will be launching its first course offering in Semester 1, 2007.

Over the last year, the e-Grad School has been developing its course offerings and finalising accreditation arrangements across our five member universities. Now this phase is largely completed, it can now offer postgraduate research qualifications that are jointly branded by the member universities.

With the course commencing in February 2007, research students across Australia can now enrol in the online Graduate Certificate in Research Commercialisation offered in partnership by the five ATN universities. Each has taken responsibility for the development of one of the five units, allowing the ATN's joint expertise to deliver a qualification of superior quality.

The certificate has its roots in the highly successful ATN LEAP and MORE modules, that have been used by ATN research students to enhance their learning experience since 2001.

The e-Grad School (Australia) is also designed so that its course offerings, or units within them, may be made available to universities outside the ATN organisation. With the Government's new Commercialisation Training Scheme (CTS) for Research students starting soon, the new Graduate Certificate is expected to be extremely attractive to universities seeking to supplement their CTS involvement.

■ More information about the Graduate Certificate may be found at www.egradschool.edu.au

Project officer joins ATN



Michelle Duryea recently joined the ATN team as the new ATN Project Officer on 27 November.

Michelle joins us from Curtin University where she was working in the Research and Development Office as the RQF Officer. In that role, she has been closely involved in advising and assisting the ATN in its work around the RQF and will be a great asset to the ATN team. Michelle can be contacted on (08) 8302 9132 or michelle.duryea@unisa.edu.au



Season's Greetings!

ATN welcomes new Vice Chancellor

Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Research Council, Professor Peter Hoj, has been appointed as the new Vice Chancellor of the University of South Australia.

Professor Hoj will be taking over from Professor Denise Bradley AO, one of the ATN's founding Vice Chancellors and current Chair of the network, when she formally retires in June 2007.

Professor Hoj has been a teaching academic, a Professor engaged in high quality research in biochemistry and viticulture, an industry leader in his former role as the Managing Director of the Australian Wine Research Institute and, as chief executive of the Australian Research Council, one of Australia's leading policy makers in the national research scene.

"I am delighted to be given the opportunity to lead an institution with a proven commitment to offer accessible education of the highest quality in an environment where end-user inspired research is not a concept but a mission achieved," Professor Hoj said.

Like all ATN universities, UniSA has a strong focus on research linked with industry and has increased its research profile in SA every year since its foundation 16 years ago.

Today it is home to six major research Institutes, is a partner in nine national Cooperative Research Centres and the lead institution for the Australian Mineral Science Research Institute.

UniSA is South Australia's most internationally engaged educational institution.



■ **Professor Peter Hoj will become the new Vice Chancellor of the University of South Australia.**

With more than 32,000 students, about a third are citizens of other countries.

ATN universities have a very strong international profile, with 1 in 4 international students choosing to study with one of our institutions.

Transnationally, we are the largest group provider of higher education, handling 36% of Australia's offshore students.

The growth and success of the ATN since its inception has been in no small part due to the support of Professor Bradley, who has constantly advocated our vision of five universities, closely aligned and engaged in joint activity to the benefit of all members.

WEXDEV leadership workshop to focus on researchers

For the last four years the ATN Women's Executive Development Program (WEXDEV) has held focused leadership capability workshops designed to provide senior women with some of the tools that they will need to be successful in today's universities.

In 2007, this workshop will focus on women within ATN universities that have the potential to undertake leadership positions in research, a group that is still numerically underrepresented in academia.

Developing research capacity is a priority for all ATN universities. The QUT WEXDEV analysis of 2006 ATN employment statistics showed that although numbers are now beginning to increase, women research leaders remain under-represented in senior academic management.

The WEXDEV Research Leadership Capability Building Workshop will take place between 5-7 February 2007 at UTS,

in association with the ATN Annual Conference. Contemporary leadership theory and issues in higher education will be examined in depth over the course of the workshop.

It will be followed by mentoring and project activities within individual institutions, as well as peer group sessions with previous participants in the WEXDEV leadership workshops.

A two-day follow up workshop will also be held later in the year to provide continuing support and feedback opportunities for participants.

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Consortium to promote research links with India

Research collaboration in environmental science, renewable energy and micro electronics will be pursued by a new consortium bringing together technology educators, research organisations and business groups in India and Australia.

UTS Dean of Engineering Professor Archie Johnston has spearheaded the formation of the Australia-India Collaborative Research Network, which involves the Australian Technology Network of Universities, India's Energy and Resources Institute, its National Institute of Technology and the Delhi College of Engineering.

Professor Johnston, who is President of the Australian Council of Engineering Deans, said the consortium was seeking support from the Australian Government's Australia-India Strategic Research Fund to conduct research and development workshops next year in Australia and India.

The workshops would open the way for research collaboration in priority areas already agreed upon by the Indian and Australian governments – environmental science, renewable energy and micro electronic devices and materials.

The initiative has the support of the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), which represents more than 100,000 companies and professionals in India. In March this year ASSOCHAM appointed



■ The Delhi College of Engineering is part of the Australia-India Collaborative Research Network.

Professor Johnston an Honorary Advisor on education and industry links with Australia.

"Whatever the decision in regarding government funding, tangible working relationships are being developed," Professor Johnston said.

"Of course from Australia's point of view, India's growing importance in the world economy is a driver, but by the same token the Indian government and industry are keen to develop educational and research pathways in Australia."

Professor Johnston said this was a message reinforced when he met the President of India, Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, earlier this month.

"In practical terms that may mean greater numbers of Indian research students coming to Australian rather than the United States and expanded opportunities for Australian graduates in India."

THE Australian Technology Network brings together five of the most innovative and enterprising universities in the nation.

We are committed to forging partnerships with industry and government to deliver practical results through focused research.

We educate graduates who are ready to enter their chosen profession, dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and eager to claim a stake in building sustainable societies of the future.

ATN universities teach around 180,000 students, or almost 20 % of Australia's student population. With 1 in 4 international students choosing to study at an ATN university, we are also the largest provider of international education, both with our onshore and offshore students.

The ATN's aim is to help secure Australia's reputation as the clever country, and contribute to its social and economic wealth, while championing the principles of access and equity that have ensured its members are the universities of first choice for more students.

• For more information about the ATN, our organisation and activities, please visit our web site at <http://www.atn.edu.au>



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