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RMIT University

University of Technology, Sydney

Queensland University of Technology

From the Director

The ATN group of universities has been very successful in ensuring that the current debate surrounding research funding continues to have an emphasis on assessing impact based research.

The ATN is arguing for a 50-50 split between quality and impact driven research. We have maintained a consistent position throughout the current debate and there appears to be agreement that impact must be part of the assessment equation.

Recently the nation's peak business lobby, the Business Council of Australia was quoted as saying that it was "pleased to see the RQF process had recognized the importance of assessing both quality and impact." The development of suitable measures for impact would, they said, "provide business and the public with an understanding of the effectiveness and contribution university research makes to the economy, community and end users."

The ATN has strongly advocated this position.

The anticipated changes to research assessment prompted the ATN to hold its own assessment of research quality across the network in order to both pre-

pare for the upcoming changes, and to provide useful input into the Research Quality Framework (RQF) drafting process.

In an exercise involving more than 660 researchers across the five universities of the ATN and from Murdoch university, the RQF Trial has uncovered some interesting issues—not least of which was the cost of the exercise.

Our aim was to develop and test a robust and efficient mechanism for the assessment of research quality and impact across the ATN, informed by relevant national and international approaches.

The ATN will now work to ensure that the lessons we have learnt from our trial inform the national process.

However, it is worth remembering what underscores our research agenda.

The Federal Government's innovation platform encourages, and indeed rewards collaborative research with industry. Any move to rate research impact downwards (against research quality) would surely act as a disincentive for industry collaboration and force researchers to become more inward looking in their efforts



Ms Vicki Thomson
Director
Australian Technology Network

Continuing to fund this research is critical for the national innovation agenda - both at an economic level and at a social level. Any change to this would be detrimental to our nation-building efforts and we strongly advocate that research ought to be funded irrespective of where it occurs.

Research impact **must** be seen as an intrinsic part of the value of research.

Internationalisation in the classroom

The ATN, together with the International Education Association of Australia will host a major conference in November, focussed on internationalisation of the curriculum.

With a focus on greater co-operation within and across sectors, the conference, to be held in Adelaide on 28 November, will examine exactly what internationalisation of the curriculum means in schools and universities.

The one-day conference will combine presentations with discussion and exchange of ideas around this question.

It has been planned to facilitate conversations and ongoing collaboration between professionals working in a range of organisations in secondary and tertiary education.

The keynote address will be delivered by internationally recognised expert, Hanneke Teekens, on the topic 'The ideal teacher in the international classroom'. **Hanneke Teekens** is Director of the Department for International Academic Relations at the Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education NUF-FIC) in The Hague. For further information on this

conference visit: www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/IEAAconference

ATN universities attract nearly a quarter of overseas students studying in Australia and we are the nations largest provider of offshore education.

Students from around the world identify ATN Universities as providing a valuable, practical higher education.

Students from more than 100 countries from all regions of the world choose to study at an ATN University.

“What does internationalisation of the curriculum mean in schools and universities?”

Network of Malaysian Technical Universities visits ATN

Representatives from the newly established Network of Malaysian Technical Universities visited the ATN recently.

Universities represented were:

- Kolej Universiti Teknikal Kebangsaan Malaysia (KUTKM)
- Kolej Universiti Tun Hussin Onn (KUITTHO)
- Kolej Universiti Kejuruteraan Utara Malaysia (KUKUM) and
- Kolej University Kejuruteraan dan Teknologi Malaysia (KUKTEM)

The four universities are public universities established in the last five years, offering academic programmes specialising in specific areas of knowledge at diploma to PhD level.

The visit was designed to familiarise the Malaysian Rectors with ATN roles, functions and challenges, and, in particular, examine how the ATN forges partnerships with industry and the professions to ensure our graduates are job ready with practical experience in the field.



From left to right:

- Tuan Haji Rusli Haji Abd. Hamid - Registrar, KUKUM
- Datuk Assoc. Prof. Dr. Abu Bakar Mohamad Diah - Deputy Rector (Research and Commercialization/ Innovation), KUTKM
- Datuk Prof. Ismail Hassan - Rector, KUTKM
- Ms Vicki Thomson - Director, ATN
- Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zuraidah Mohd Zain - Dean, Academic & International Management, KUKUM
- Prof. Dr. Hj. IsmailHj. Bakar - Rector, KUITTHO
- Prof. Dr. Mohamed Said Mat Lela - Rector, KUKTEM
- Assoc. Prof. Dr. SulaimanHj. Hasan - Director, Centre for Corporate and International Relation - KUITTHO
- Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rosli Abu Bakar - Dean, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering - KUKTEM

ATN forging bonds in China

Next week, representatives from the ATN will be attending the 10th Annual ISTA Conference and AGM in Nanjing.

Following the MOU signed

between the Chinese-based ISTA and the ATN in July, ATN representatives were invited to attend the anniversary event. The visit also includes brief attachments by ATN staff to ISTA uni-

versities.

Prof. Barney Glover (PVC: R&D, Curtin) and Prof. Neil Furlong (PVC: Research & Innovation, RMIT) are invited speakers for the event.

Metabolic Fitness - New Insights

The ATN Centre for Metabolic Fitness, in conjunction with the Nutrition Society of Australia (Adelaide) hosted a mini-Symposium to discuss current research into meta-

bolic syndrome and metabolic fitness. The mini-symposium was just one of the many activities associated with the ATN Research challenge recipient.

For more information, please visit the newly launched Centre website at <http://www.atn.edu.au/CentreforMetabolicFitness/news/events.htm>

Medical school not a prerequisite for health research

The ATN continues to play a critical role in the development of the health and well being of Australians – with researchers at the newly established Centre for Metabolic Fitness receiving three NHMRC research grants in the latest round announced by the Federal Government.

Proving that a medical school is not a prerequisite for critical health research, the Centre's co-director, Dr Jon Buckley has been successful in two project grants that promise to provide valuable insight into areas that could greatly impact on the quality of life for many Australians.

Dr Buckley will be examining the long-term health implications of the many low-carbohydrate diets that have become prevalent of late, the best known being the "Atkin's Diet".

The lack of research in the area currently means that there are no appropriate public health guidelines to

apply to these types of diet, which clearly needs rectifying given their increasing popularity.

He will also be performing a clinical study to see if changed dietary habits and exercise can have a positive impact on women suffering from polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), a serious disorder affecting 5-10% of women of reproductive age.

ATN Centre colleague, Dr Rosalie Viney, Deputy Director of UTS' Centre for Health Economics Research & Evaluation, was also successful in receiving a grant, and will analyse the current 'quality of life' measure used to decide what medical services and pharmaceuticals should be funded.



The more detailed analysis proposed in her approach has the potential to significantly impact Australian health policy.

The grants demonstrate the value ATN researchers can bring to national innovation from outside the more traditional medical research disciplines, which tend to focus on reactive measures rather than preventative health care and health policy.

About half of all public research funding in Australia currently goes to health and medical research, and predominantly to those universities which have medical schools.

In total ATN universities were successful in receiving almost \$5million in NHMRC funding.

The ATN Centre for Metabolic Fitness brings a unique cross disciplinary approach to its research into health and lifestyle issues.

Representatives from the ATN will be attending the 10th Annual ISTA Conference and AGM in Nanjing



Dr Jon Buckley
Co-Director
ATN Centre for Metabolic
Fitness

"a medical school is not a prerequisite for critical health research"

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2005 ATN Evaluations & Assessment Conference

The fourth Annual ATN Evaluations and Assessment Conference will take place between 30th November and 1st December 2005, and will be hosted by the Institute for Interactive Media and Learning at the University of Technology, Sydney.

The Evaluations and Assessment Conference is attended by delegates from educational institutions from around the Asia-Pacific region. The conference provides links to people and organisations that are contributing to advancing our understanding of assessment and evaluation processes and practices.

The conference attracts academics teaching in the disciplines, staff who provide support for university teaching and learning, evaluation unit managers, policy makers and senior university managers interested in discussing issues of evaluation and assessment in higher education.

The theme of 'making a difference' is an opportunity to explore how the increased focus on evaluation and assessment is influencing university practices. Participants in the confer-

ence are encouraged to explore the substantive changes that have been made through evaluation and assessment, and to find evidence that they are indeed making a difference to our students' university experiences. It is anticipated that presenters at the conference will address a range of questions including,

- How are evaluation and assessment practices enhancing the students' experience of university learning?
- Are academic teaching practices becoming more effective?
- Is assessment preparing students for a changing world?
- What influence does the current higher education policy landscape have on teaching and learning?

For more information on the conference, its program, invited speakers and to register for the event, please visit the conference web site at <http://www.ims.uts.edu.au/EAC2005/index.html>

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>