

# ATN in PROFILE

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SOLUTIONS



## AUSTRALIAN TECHNOLOGY NETWORK OF UNIVERSITIES

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## From the director...

THE theme of the 2006 ATN conference is reform and how we, as a sector and a group of universities, accelerate ahead of the steamroller that is reform rather than be trampled by it!

In 2005, the Federal Government has been dogged in its pursuit of change in the areas of industrial relations, university governance, student unionism and campus services, the assessment of research quality and impact, and teacher education. In addition there have been inquiries into issues surrounding student income support, the quality of offshore international education and the future approval and accreditation processes for Australian higher education.

Universities do not operate in isolation. They play a vital role in the social and economic development of our nation, in partnership with



Australian  
Technology  
Network  
director Vicki  
Thomson

committed to ensuring that it recognises and funds appropriately, the quality and impact of research. A reduction in funding is not a sustainable option.

And what of 2006? The Federal Government has already indicated that it will be assessing how best to divide the spoils of the controversial Learning and Teaching Performance Fund for 2007. The ATN has no argument that the quality of learning and teaching in our universities is a critical issue and that it be measured and compared – however the current methodology is, in our

**“We need a system that is driven by student and employer demands, together with national research priorities.”**

the communities within which they operate. Any change in policy, whether it be in the area of IR, research funding or teaching quality standards, will have a broad impact.

The ATN is a powerful coalition which is responsible for teaching more than 180,000 students – or almost 20 per cent of the Australian university system. Between them the five universities teach 42 percent of all students studying architecture in Australia, and 26 percent of all engineering students. More than 70 percent of ATN universities' research funding flows from partnerships with industry and government - a far higher proportion than other universities.

It is against this backdrop that we anxiously await the outcome of the Government's assessment of research and subsequent funding. At the time of writing, the final model upon which funding will be distributed was yet to be announced, however we remain

view, neither fair nor accurate and we look forward to having input into any reassessment of methodology.

And on another tangent of teaching and learning, Minister Brendan Nelson has weighed into a proposal in which undergraduate places would be transferred to outer suburban and regional universities which would specialise in undergraduate programmes. A two tier system is, in the ATN's view, not the preferred option – instead we need a system that is driven by student and employer demands, together with national research priorities.

2006 is shaping up to be as tumultuous as 2005 – the trick will be to keep ahead (or at least alongside) the reform steamroller!

Happy New Year!

University of South  
Australia

Curtin University of  
Technology

RMIT University

University of  
Technology, Sydney

Queensland University  
of Technology

## Internationalisation at the forefront

WITH international students forming an integral component of the ATN student profile, how and what we deliver to our students, in a practical sense, is very much a priority for our institutions.

With that in mind the ATN, in conjunction with the International Education Association of Australia (IEAA), recently held a conference examining internationalisation of the curriculum from a secondary and tertiary perspective.

Education is a multi-billion dollar export industry for Australia, and full fee paying international students contribute significantly to the economy.

However it is vitally important that the focus continue to be on providing quality education, rather than simply enrolling as many students as possible.

The conference, which was hosted by the University of South Australia, heard from educators, and importantly, students. High school and university students, both local and international, shared their experience as students studying abroad, providing a valuable "user perspective" for educators to draw upon.

The keynote was delivered by internationally recognised Hanneke



• (from left) Hanneke Teekens, Director of the Department for International Academic Relations at the Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education (NUFFIC), Betty Leask, Dean Teaching and Learning, Business Divisions, UNISA, Angela Scarino, Director of the Research Centre for Languages and Cultures Education, UniSA, and Dr Anna Ciccarelli, Executive Director, International and Development, UniSA.

Teekens, Director of the Department for International Academic Relations at the Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education (NUFFIC) in The Hague.

Ms Teekens spoke about her research into the profile of the ideal lecturer in the international classroom.

Director of the Research Centre for Languages and Cultures Education, in the School of International Studies at UniSA, Angela Scarino, focussed on both the tertiary and secondary environments.

The ATN is the nation's largest provider of offshore education.

## China visit yields closer collaboration

CLOSER collaboration in key areas of research and academic exchange will be the result of a visit to China by ATN delegates in November.

At the invitation of International Strategic Technology Alliance (ISTA), the ATN attended the ISTA Annual General Meeting and visited several of its member universities including Harbin University of Technology, Shanghai Jiao Tong and Fudan Universities.

The ATN signed an agreement with ISTA, a university network comprising 22 leading tertiary institutes from the Chinese mainland, U.K. and US, in July 2005.

The network-to-network agreement is aimed at fostering applied research and development and commercialisation of technologies and products through international collaboration.

The Chinese Government regards education as a key priority, believing that the strength and competitiveness of the nation increasingly depends on education development and innovation in science and technology – priority areas for ATN members.

ATN members already have various existing relationships with ISTA members. These include an arrangement between RMIT and the Nanjing University of Traditional Chinese Medicine and the deliver of a Master of Management in



• Professor Neil Furlong from RMIT at the ISTA Annual General Meeting.

Sport Management (Chinese) by UTS at Tsinghua University.

Representing the ATN were Professor Barney Glover (Curtin), Professor Neil Furlong (RMIT), Professor Rod Wissler (QUT), Professor Andrew Parfitt (UniSA) and Ms Vicki Thomson (ATN).

Addressing the conference on the theme of industry technology transfer and strategic research alliances, Professor Neil Furlong outlined the benefits gained from a working alliance such as the ATN, particularly in the area of joint research and commercialisation.

## Leadership role in sector reforms

THE University of South Australia will be the host for the 2006 ATN conference, which is to be held from Wednesday 8th February to Friday 10th February.

The conference will examine the current state of the national higher education landscape, its changing nature, and the ways in which the university sector can take a leadership role in shaping the reforms that are taking place.

Topics to be covered include:

- The current reform environment
  - Implications of the Research Quality Framework
  - University rankings
  - Funding teaching and learning fairly
  - International engagement
- The annual conference is the ATN's major strategic planning event for the year and involves all Vice Chancellors, senior management, administrative staff and academics from across the five ATN universities.

• For further information visit the ATN website at [www.atn.edu.au](http://www.atn.edu.au)

## Researchers take out industry awards

HIGH impact research undertaken by ATN researchers in partnership with industry and business was recognised in the recent Business Higher Education Round Table (BHERT) awards.

Researchers from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and RMIT took out the Best Entrepreneurial Educator of the Year and the Best International Collaboration Research Awards.

The awards recognise outstanding achievements in collaboration between business and higher education in the fields of Research & Development and Education & Training.

In addition, the ATN sponsors an award for the Best Entrepreneurial Educator of the Year, to acknowledge the importance of education in developing and nurturing entrepreneurs, and to showcase best practice in entrepreneurial education. The ATN has sponsored this award for the last five years.

The award was won by Associate Professor Chris Collet from the QUT Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation took out the Best Entrepreneurial Educator of the Year Award, while Professor Adrian Mouritz, Head – Aerospace



• (from left) Professor Neil Furlong (PVC: Research & Innovation, RMIT), Federal Minister for Education, Training, Science & Technology Brendan Nelson, Professor Chris Collet (Institute of Health & Biomedical Innovation, QUT), Professor Arun Sharma (DVC: Research & Commercialisation, QUT); and Professor Murray Scott (CEO, CRC for Advanced Composite Systems, RMIT Adjunct Professor in the School of Aerospace, Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering) ATN.

and Systems at RMIT University, along with partners from the CRC for Advanced Composite Structures and Airbus Deutschland GmbH received the award for Best International Collaboration for their "Composite Defect Modeling Project".

The work of Professors Collet and Mouritz highlight the critical importance of high impact research.



• (from left) Professor Bruce King, Director, Flexible Learning Centre, UNISA  
Professor Anthony Staak, DVC Academic, Cape Peninsula University of Technology  
Vicki Thomson, Director ATN  
Professor Shirley Alexander, Dean Education (UTS)  
Dr Mark Hay, Manager, Higher Education Quality Committee, South Africa  
Bruce Shortland-Jones, Director, Learning Support Network, Curtin

## Close alliance with Sth African network

THE newly formed South African Technology Network (SATN) is looking to forge a closer alliance with the ATN.

Formed as a result of recent Technikon and University mergers, the six-member organisation is looking to learn from the experience of the ATN.

The group will focus on key areas of collaboration between members and with international partners and benchmarking.

Representatives from the group visited ATN members earlier this month, including QUT, UTS and RMIT and also attended the 2005 ATN Evaluation and Assessment Conference, held in Sydney.

The SATN will participate in the 2006 ATN Conference to be held in Adelaide, in February.

South Africa's new technology network is looking to learn from the experience of the ATN

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## Clare Burton Scholarships expanded

FOR the first time since their inception, the ATN has awarded two scholarships for 2006 under the Clare Burton scholarship program.

The Scholarships will provide funds to support post graduate research into gender equity.

Queensland University of Technology student and film maker, Phoebe Hart, will use her scholarship to produce a documentary which explores the experiences of people with Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (AIS).

Current research indicates that almost 2 in every 200 of the population are born with this intersex condition where the reproductive organs are at variance with the genetic sex of the child.

Phoebe has had a successful career in the Australian film and television industry working with the ABC and Network 10, as well as freelancing.

The other successful scholarship recipient is RMIT student Alice Stoakes, whose research will measure the impact of separation, divorce and widowhood on the labour and housing markets with a particular focus on women-headed households.

Little research has been undertaken in this area of low income women-headed households. This research will analyse whether housing policy is supportive of welfare changes that mean sole parents will have to work.



Queensland University of Technology student and film maker Phoebe Hart will produce a documentary on AIS.

It will provide data that can then inform more targeted and effective policies aimed at increasing female labour and housing market participation.

These two ambitious, but very different, projects illustrate the wide range of study that gender equity encompasses.

As well as the funds provided to support their research, the two scholarship recipients will also receive individual support and mentoring related to their current research and future careers from their host institution.

● The Clare Burton Scholarship was established by the five ATN universities to honour and continue the work of Dr. Clare Burton, a pioneering Australian researcher, into aspects of gender equity.

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>

