

Australian Technology Network

FIVE UNIVERSITIES: ONE VISION



Curtin University
of Technology



University of
South Australia



RMIT University



University of Technology,
Sydney



Queensland University
of Technology

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MEDIA RELEASE

OVERDUE FOCUS ON HUMANITIES

Australia's leading technology universities have welcomed an event in Canberra this week which will profile the importance of the humanities, arts and social sciences in a future innovative economy.

With more than 20,000 of its students across the ATN studying the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, the ATN says the formation of the Council for Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS) is a critical step in breaking down the misunderstanding that often exists within the broader community about the importance of the interface between innovation and humanities.

The CHASS event will bring together higher education representatives and Federal MPs over two days, culminating in the inaugural meeting of CHASS.

ATN Director, Vicki Thomson said the formation of CHASS, with its targeted focus, is vital in understanding the importance of cultural development and social cohesion to future economic and social prosperity.

"The development and take-up of new ideas is the key to a future innovative economy and often relies on cross disciplinary perspectives," Ms Thomson said.

"If Australia is to maintain its reputation for academic excellence in *all* areas, we believe the value of the humanities must be recognised and explored as vital to our prosperity, and not as an add-on.

"The Federal Government has placed a strong emphasis on innovation as a key element in developing Australia as an innovative economy yet funding for research in the humanities remains generally quite low when compared to other disciplines.

"This fails to recognise that the key to innovation is the intersect between applied research and the humanities. The ATN universities work at the interface between the old disciplines, assisting in their transformation to meet the needs of the 21st century in cutting edge areas such as design and communications.

"For example, Mark Burry of RMIT's Spatial Innovation Architecture Lab is using computer technology to design the completion of Gaudi's famous Familia Sagrada in Barcelona."

The ATN is a Gold Sponsor of the CHASS event.

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