



BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS. FINDING SOLUTIONS

ATN in PROFILE

Volume 5, Edition 4 – July 2009

From the director ...

I was fortunate enough recently to be involved in the Skills Australia workforce scenario planning workshop held in June.

Outcomes of this workshop and others held by Skills Australia will be used to inform the National Workforce Development Strategy. Three scenarios were considered by the expert panels which comprised representatives from across industry, government and post secondary education. Not surprisingly, in each of the three scenarios considered, the critical importance of a skilled and educated workforce was paramount.

Australian higher education brings significant economic, social and cultural benefits to the Australian community. With a commitment to providing high quality professional and vocational education, research oriented towards the needs of industry and the community and a genuine focus on international education, the ATN is a major partner in delivering those benefits.

As the group of universities most closely linked to the professions we have a significant role to play in addressing the future skills needs of the nation. We educate 20 per cent of Australia's graduates, our retention of disadvantaged students is above the national average and critically, our first year



■ ATN director
Vicki Thomson

commencements from TAFE award courses sits above the national average at 10.4 per cent. (2006, national average 9.7 per cent).

The ATN supports a system which is underpinned by the principles of flexibility, innovation and better developed pathways between the educational sectors of secondary school, VET and higher education.

Such a system will ensure Australia has the effective mechanisms for ensuring a workforce that is sufficiently prepared to meet both national and local skills needs. Importantly such a system must be underpinned by quality which stands up to international comparators.

There is much work underway at the moment looking at this very issue. Skills Australia is developing a workforce strategy, which must be underpinned by a skilled and educated workforce. The Australian Quality Framework (AQF) is under review and the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) is seeking responses to its discussion paper "Setting and Monitoring Academic Standards for Australian Higher Education".

Sitting above all of this is the establishment of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, announced in the May budget by the Federal Government – an initiative the ATN has long advocated and supports.

The work of each of these bodies is intrinsically linked to the other. In planning for our workforce needs we need an educated and skilled workforce.

■ Continued Page 2

inside >>	
Supporting students who need it most	2
2009 B-HERT Awards now open	2
Clare Burton Lecture to focus on women and work	3
International education key to economy	3
Nanomedicine workshop	3
Solutions lead to results	4

member universities

- University of South Australia
- Curtin University of Technology
- RMIT University
- University of Technology, Sydney
- Queensland University of Technology

www.atn.edu.au



AUSTRALIAN
TECHNOLOGY
NETWORK
OF UNIVERSITIES



“Student poverty is a significant barrier to participation and retention in higher education” –Professor Ross Milbourne

Supporting those who need it most

Changes announced to student income support measures as part of the May Budget will be crucial in redressing university access and participation.

ATN Chair, Ross Milbourne, said the package of measures will ensure that public funding is directed at those most in need.

“Student poverty is a significant barrier to participation and retention in higher education, and to the development of a skilled and flexible workforce,” Professor Milbourne said.

“Adequate financial support, for a broad range of students, which enables them to study and apply themselves, is in the students’ and in Australia’s best interest.

“The Bradley review highlighted the current anomalies in the system particularly as it relates to the distribution of Youth Allowance whereby, in some cases, it is being accessed by students who are living at home in high socio-economic status households.

“This is inequitable and the measures

announced in the May budget will ensure more support for more students”.

The ATN has long advocated the need for an overhaul of the income support system which included reducing the age of independence, introducing a relocation scholarship, exempting equity scholarships from income testing and increasing the Post-Graduate Award stipend.

“A well-structured income support system should act to increase enrolments from low-income people. This package will ensure this,” Professor Milbourne said.

ATN universities enrol 20 per cent of the nation’s students, 19 per cent of low SES students, 10 per cent of rural and regional students, 14 per cent of disabled students and 17 per cent of indigenous students.

Our retention rate across the ATN of disadvantaged students is above the national average. With more than 185,000 students studying at an ATN University across the nation, the ATN places a high priority on ensuring a university education is available to all who seek it.

2009 B-HERT Awards

Applications now open

The ATN is pleased to sponsor the 2009 Business/Higher Education Round Table Awards.

B-HERT strengthens the relationship between business and tertiary education. Its members are leaders in tertiary education, business, industry bodies and research institutions.

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

B-HERT is seeking applications for the 2009 B-HERT Awards in the following categories:

- Best Research & Development Collaboration
- Best Higher Education & Training Collaboration
- Best Vocational Education & Training Collaboration
- Best Community Engagement Collaboration
- Best Collaboration with a Regional Focus

In addition —

- Best Entrepreneurial Educator of the Year
- Outstanding Philanthropic Support of Higher Education

Closing date for applications is 2 September 2009

To nominate for a B-HERT Award, please visit <http://www.bhert.com/awards.html>

From the director

■ From Page 1

To achieve that outcome we must have a robust education system which delivers what industry requires and we must do all of this against a backdrop of a quality system supported by robust quality measures.

The ATN does have two major concerns about proposals raised by AUQA in its Academic Standards paper; first, that it gives undue emphasis to only one element of academic standards, and second, that it focuses too strongly on standardisation as opposed to standards.

Either of these emphases, but particularly in combination, will not in our view advance the management of academic standards in Australia. Also, where appropriate other key stakeholders, such as industry and the professions, should be involved.

The ATN institutions actively pursue this through external involvement in curriculum and graduate attributes development. (For further detail please download full submission at [www.atn.edu.au/newsroom/Docs/2009 July 06 Setting and Monitoring Academic Standards.pdf](http://www.atn.edu.au/newsroom/Docs/2009%20July%2006%20Setting%20and%20Monitoring%20Academic%20Standards.pdf).)

The ATN looks forward to continuing our direct engagement with Government and the relevant bodies as each of these processes develop. They are all fundamental to our future economic and social development.



Vicki Thomson, ATN director



■ Marian Baird will present this year's Clare Burton Lecture series.

Maternity leave, women and work

Analysing changes in Australia's attitudes to working women is the topic of this year's Clare Burton Lecture.

A Slow Revolution: Maternity Leave, Women and Work, will be presented by Marian Baird at the five ATN Universities and in Canberra in October and November. The lecture considers changes in Australia's attitudes to working women by examining maternity leave policies from 1979, when the first unpaid maternity leave decision of the Industrial Relations Commission was made, to the government's 2009 announcement of a national system of paid parental leave.

A leading researcher on maternity leave in Australia, Marian's work has been influential in informing public and organisational policy and practice in Australia. She is an Associate Professor in Work and Organisational Studies, and the Convenor of the Women and Work Research Group in the Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Sydney.

The Clare Burton lecture series commemorates the work of Dr Clare Burton, a leading intellectual and activist in the field of gender equity in employment. The lectures are sponsored by ATN WEXDEV, the executive development program for women in the five universities of the ATN.

A publication of a decade of the Clare Burton Lecture series, *The Promise and the Price. Ten Years of the Clare Burton Memorial Lectures*, will be launched at this year's lecture.

Dates

Curtin University – Friday 16 October 2009

RMIT University – Monday 19 October 2009

University of Technology Sydney – Thursday 22 October 2009

Queensland University of Technology – Friday 23 October 2009

University of Canberra & Australian National University – Monday 26 October 2009

University of South Australia – Tuesday 10 November 2009

■ Further details will be made available as they are finalised.

International education key part of nation's economy

As Australia's leading providers of international education, the ATN believes that international education is a key part of the Australian economy, not merely because of its contributions to skilled graduates and research, but through its wider contribution to the global community.

Supporting statements issued by the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Federal Opposition leader, the ATN sees international education as critically important to higher education institutions and Australia, in terms of the contributions made by international students to campus life and to the education of their peers.

Australia has a higher education system that attracts students from across the world, with almost 25 per cent of international students studying at an ATN University. In addition, approximately 15 per cent of Indian higher education students studying in Australia are at one of

our five member universities.

ATN Chair, Professor Ross Milbourne, said Australia was a leading nation in terms of building international education, onshore and offshore.

"We have built this market on a foundation of diversity and a guarantee of quality and safety. We must now work hard to ensure those three pillars are not compromised in any way and that we continue to provide the high quality flexible learning environments which have enabled many thousands of students achieve their potential in an increasingly globalised community," Professor Milbourne said. Senior staff from ATN members QUT and RMIT represented Australia's higher education sector as part of the parliamentary delegation that travelled to India last month to discuss issues affecting Indian students in Australia.

Australia-China NanoNetwork Nanomedicine Workshop 26-27 August 2009, University of South Australia

The Australia-China NanoNetwork is planning an international workshop on Nanomedicine and wishes to hear from ATN and/or ISTA researchers interested in participating in, or contributing to, this workshop.

The Nanomedicine Workshop proposes to cover recent developments from laboratory research to translating novel ideas to clinical trials.

The workshop will provide an opportunity for participants to learn from research leaders in the broad field of nanomedicine. It will also provide a platform for the exchange of cutting-edge ideas and foster the establishment of collaborative research projects between ATN and ISTA nanoscientists.

The workshop scope will include, but not be restricted to, nanoparticles enhanced biomedical imaging, drug delivery, nano-biosensing, nano-diagnostics, and the

synthesis and characterisation of advanced nanomaterials in view of their medical and biomedical applications.

Keynote speaker, Professor Ning Gu, Director of the Research Center for Nano-scale Science and Technology at Southeast University, is one of the foremost nanoscientists in China in the area of functional nanoparticles.

The event will be preceded by a cocktail function on the evening of 26 August, at which the formal launch for the Australia-China NanoNetwork and website will take place.

It will be hosted by the University of South Australia's Vice Chancellor and also attended by external stakeholders with an interest in nanoscience/nanotechnology and Sino-Australian relations.

■ If you wish to contribute to, or participate in, this workshop contact Matthew Hee: matthew.hee@unisa.edu.au, by 1 August.

Finding solutions leads to results

Closing the gap between the wellbeing of Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth was just one of the ATN University projects funded under the ARC Linkage grants awarded in May by the Federal Government.

The ATN universities continued to hold their reputation of building partnerships with industry and undertaking research which is relevant, has impact and responds to the needs of our nation with the 44 projects awarded funding in Round 2 taking total Linkage funding to excess of \$21 million in 2009.

“With 54 per cent of funding coming from Linkage in 2009, the ATN performs strongly in ARC grants where the focus is on enterprise and community linkages,” said ATN Executive Director, Vicki Thomson.

Community health and sustainability featured in the awards list with funding allocated to QUT to research the effects on children’s health of exposure to ultrafine particles from traffic emissions.

In conjunction with Queensland Transport and

the Woolcock Institute for Medical Research the project aims to improve urban design to lower children’s exposure to ultrafine particles, thus reducing life-long impacts, health care cost and productivity losses.

A consortia led by UniSA working closely with Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Seeley International and Rheem Australia has received funding to investigate ways to minimise the impact of the Greenhouse Pollution Reduction Scheme on householders and the building industry by evaluating the environmental and economic costs and benefits of retrofitting of major fixed appliances such as thermal insulation, glazing, air infiltration, solar photovoltaic systems and water reuse.

“The impact of such research on Australian communities and industry is obvious and immediate and it is critical that this type of research continues to be assessed and funded on the basis of its quality and impact,” Ms Thomson said.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

FINDING SOLUTIONS



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

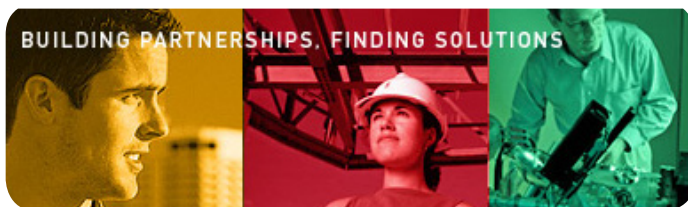
We are committed to forging partnerships with industry and government to deliver practical results through focused research.

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 www.atn.edu.au



member universities

University of South Australia
Curtin University of Technology
RMIT University
University of Technology, Sydney
Queensland University of Technology

www.atn.edu.au

contact us

Postal address

GPO Box 2471
Adelaide 5001
South Australia

Phone

+618 8302 9132

Fax

+618 8302 7191

Email: vicki.thomson@unisa.edu.au