



ATN in PROFILE

Volume 6, Edition 1 – February 2010

WELCOME ... from the Chair...

Welcome to the 2010 ATN Conference. Our annual conference allows us to come together to discuss and agree upon directions for the year. It provides the chance for all of us to explore and develop new ideas and form stronger relationships as we bring together senior staff from our member universities.



ATN Chair, Professor
Ross Milbourne.

Combining work and social interaction enhances the ATN's position as we look to showcase the results our successful collaboration is delivering. This year, we welcome to the conference delegates from the Chinese affiliated ISTA Network, the South African Technology Network and the University of Waterloo – three of our important and significant international alliances, as well as the Hon Senator Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research. This year's conference theme – "Building Capacity with Quality" – will continue our focus on functioning as a truly national network and one which has a respected voice with the Federal Government in the development of policy for the higher education sector.

2009 was a year of great success for the ATN.

The Network continued to be the Australian University Group with the fastest growing research capacity. The ARC is the conduit of 90 per cent of Australia's non-medical competitive research funding. Since the ARC's inception in 2001 the ATN has increased its relative share of that merit based funding by 41.7 per cent. Importantly, 51 per cent of our ARC funding comes from linkage grants designed specifically for partnerships between researchers and business, industry and community organisations. In that, we excel. 2010 will provide new challenges as the Government moves to implement the reforms outlined in the Bradley Review of Higher Education. The ATN will continue to be a significant partner with Government, industry and the community in this process.

2010 is also a federal election year and in that context we will continue to work with the Government and Opposition parties on issues we see as vital to Australia's global competitiveness and position as a provider of higher education services and national growth. Many of these issues will be explored in greater detail at the 2010 conference and include:

- Development of a response and contribution to policy development as it relates to participation targets.
- Full cost of research - Within the context of a

shared ATN trial project, continue to work with DIISR on ensuring a coherent, workable framework for the full cost of research. In the first instance this will be related to research, but also consider exploring full costing for teaching.

- TEQSA - Development of a response and contribution to policy development, including the development of academic standards.
- Development of a response and contribution to policy development in relation to future academic workforce resourcing.
- Further development of Australia-China NanoNetwork collaborative project.

The strength of our Network is our shared commitment to collaboration internally, nationally and internationally. It is this culture which enables those who study within the ATN, those whose research is based with the ATN, and those who view us as an employer of choice, to enjoy the significant additional benefits of internal cooperation and external linkages. The ATN conference is the perfect forum in which to further embed this collaborative culture and I invite you all to work and interact with your colleagues from other universities during the conference. Again, as Chair of the Australian Technology Network of Universities, I welcome you to the 2010 ATN Annual Conference – enjoy!

Ross Milbourne

member universities

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



AUSTRALIAN
TECHNOLOGY
NETWORK
OF UNIVERSITIES

Transparent Costing trial key to continued research funding

From next year, funding distributed to Universities under the Sustainable Research Excellence (SRE) scheme will be contingent upon participation in both Transparent Costing (TC) and ERA. The TC trial will be conducted in two phases:

- February 2010 – A survey of staff time and a calculation of indirect costs.
- May 2010 – A second survey and calculation of indirect costs associated with Australian Competitive Grant Research.

The ATN Universities have agreed to work together on key elements of the trial and are in the process of developing a set of agreed principles which will provide the framework for an ATN Transparent Costing trial, and conducting a comparative analysis of the trial outcomes in each university.

It is intended that the compilation of this scale of data will aid the ATN greatly in providing feedback to DIISR as part of its evaluation process.

Whilst the processes are not identical, ATN Executive Director, Vicki Thomson, and the DVC Research and Commercialisation, QUT, Professor Arun Sharma, recently visited the UK with the main purpose of examining the impact of Transparent Costing on universities and the research environment more broadly. In addition, meetings were held with the Higher Education Funding for England, the Research Council United Kingdom, the British Confederation of Industry, and Universities UK.

To assist ATN members in preparing for the implementation of Transparent Costing, the ATN is hosting two workshops as part of the annual conference.



Pierre Espinasse, Head Research Services, University of Oxford, United Kingdom.

Both of these sessions will be facilitated by Pierre Espinasse, Head Research Services, University of Oxford. The rationale behind the two workshops and the decision to involve a broad range of stakeholders from across the Network is based on what was learned during the UK visit.

A key outcome of our consultations to date is the critical need to ensure that this issue and the adoption of Transparent Costing is not seen as simply a “research” issue or a “finance” issue but as a whole of institution issue – particularly as it relates to marketing and communication across the institution and engagement of academic staff in the process.

In addition, Pierre will address the conference more specifically on Transparent Costing and the impact on industry engagement from a UK perspective.

A graduate in Languages and Economics, Pierre has over 18 years’ experience working in research management and funding,

initially with the UK Research Councils and, since 1992, at the University of Oxford where he is currently Deputy Director of Research Services. Research Services employs 45 staff and deals with all issues relating to the external funding of research, handling several thousand grants and contracts each year.

Pierre’s current responsibilities include the delivery of day to day research services across the University, the development and provision of related management systems and information, and the management of Full Economic Costs (FEC) at project level. Pierre also engages at a national and international level on the development of research funding policy.

Boost for ATN/Canadian collaboration

The ATN was recently successful in securing funding from the Canadian Government to assist in the development of research collaboration with key Canadian Universities. This follows the signing of a researcher exchange agreement with the University of Waterloo in September last year.

The Ontario-based university is a leading research university in the area of health promotion and disease prevention, bioinformatics and biotechnology and sustainability.

It is also runs the world’s largest undergraduate industry placement program. It is our lead researchers across the Network and at the University of Waterloo who will now drive the next step of the research collaboration and the first step

in this process is a visit and participation in the ATN Annual conference by Associate Professor David Johnson (pictured).

Whilst the ATN/Canada collaboration is expected to eventually cover many research areas of mutual interest the focus for this visit will be renewable (wind) energy.

The visit will also involve a workshop with ATN researchers. These discussions will consider in some detail likely skill matches between the visiting Canadian scholar and ATN researchers working across a range of renewable energy domains.

The conference will also hear from the Canadian High Commission’s Manager, Academic Relations, Mr Tony McKittrick.



Panel to examine international education

A panel of leading experts will examine in detail the future of international education in Australia as part of a wide-ranging discussion at the annual conference, involving the Acting CEO of Austrade, Mr Peter Yuile and the Group Manager, International, DEEWR, Mr Colin Walters.

The latest ranking of Australia's top exports of goods and services (December 2009) show education services ranked fourth in 2008-09, behind coal, iron ore and gold (\$54.7 billion, \$34.2 billion and \$17.5 billion respectively).

Education services had been ranked Australia's third largest export since 2006 and the value of education exports has continued to grow strongly. In 2008-09, education exports were up 23.2 per cent over the previous financial year.

However, coal, iron ore and gold increased in exports value by much higher rates – 123.9 per cent, 66.9 per cent and 42.7 per cent respectively – in the same period.

Education continues to be the largest services export industry and the higher education sector generated \$9.5 billion in



International students make up one third of all ATN students, but the sector is not without its challenges.

export income in 2008-09.

However the sector is not without its challenges – the most prominent being the recent reaction to attacks on Indian nationals in Melbourne. In response, the Australian Government has introduced

new measures to assist overseas students affected by the closure of an international education provider, increased the minimum financial requirements for overseas students to ensure they can meet their living costs while in Australia and made changes to the student visa program to enable netter control of fraud.

In addition, the Government has announced that effective July this year, responsibility for the marketing and promotion of Australian international education will be the responsibility of Austrade.

With international students making up one third of all ATN students and one in four international students choosing to study at one of our five universities, the panel discussion at the conference will provide a valuable opportunity to explore "What next for international education".

The session will be facilitated by ATN Deputy Chair and Curtin Vice Chancellor, Professor Jeanette Hackett, herself a former DVC International and the recipient of the 2009 Excellence in Leadership in International Education award.

Fast facts about the ATN

Did you know...

- In 2009 ATN members received eight Awards for Teaching Excellence.
- Curtin received an Award for Programs that Enhance Learning for their Master of Business Administration (MBA), as did QUT's Equity Scholarships Scheme.
- The Prime Minister's Award for University Teacher of the Year went to Associate Professor Syed Mahfuzul Aziz, of UniSA.
- All ATN universities received funding in the last round of the Learning and Teaching Performance Funds.
- Curtin University has become the first ATN University to position in the top 500 in the Shanghai Jiaotong Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU).
- Both UniSA and RMIT received their highest ever levels of Discovery funding in the last round.
- UniSA ranked first in its State for Linkage Grant outcomes in the last round, demonstrating the performance of universities like ours with a commitment to, and a history of, engagement with industry and community.
- Our universities are young, but growing quickly. While it is true that our absolute share of competitive funding is lower than long established universities, the ATN has increased its relative share of ARC funding by 41.7 per cent in seven years, demonstrating our fast growing research capacity.
- Likewise, over the last decade, the ATN's increase in PhD completions has been twice the national average and published research work produced within ATN Universities has outstripped national growth.



- 15 per cent of our HDR students, are either undertaking Professional Doctorates on fully funded industry scholarships or undertaking Australian Post Graduate Awards (Industry). Of the remaining, at least 50 per cent of HDR projects involve direct interaction within an industry setting to conduct their research.
- While ATN universities do not incorporate medical schools, we all maintain a profile in the health sphere that uses our particular strengths to contribute to the quality of research in health issues for Australians, for example.
 - The National Drug Research Institute (NDRI) at Curtin University;
 - The National Centre for Health Information Research & Training (NCHIRT) at QUT.

TEQSA concerns to be discussed

The ATN has raised a series of issues it has with the establishment of the new Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) in a letter to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Whilst supportive of the establishment of such a national regulatory body the ATN believes there are key implementation matters which are of concern. Amongst these is the potential for the process to constrain institutional autonomy and impose levels of intervention and reporting requirements which will be burdensome and significantly resource intensive – particularly for universities delivering programs across both higher education and VET sectors.

The ATN is also concerned that, to date, there has been little formal engagement and consultation with the sector. As well, there has been no indication of the objectives and principles that will underpin TEQSA's operation governing its roles, functions and decision-making powers.

Clarity surrounding these is fundamental to inform the level and basis for interventions by TEQSA, accreditation and review processes to be used, and the purpose and definition of standards, measures and benchmarks.

On the issue of defining academic standards, the ATN is recommending that they

be developed on the basis of measures already in use. These and other issues will be the subject of a broad-ranging panel discussion at the ATN annual conference which will include a presentation from the Head, Learning Networks, Australian Teaching and Learning Council (ALTC), Professor Christine Ewan.

Professor Ewan is currently Project Leader for the Learning and Teaching Academic Standards Project being conducted by the ALTC. She has degrees in Medicine, Anthropology and Education and extensive experience in higher education teaching and learning policy and practice.

She is an Emeritus Professor of the University of Wollongong and has been a Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellor responsible for academic programs, learning support, academic quality assurance and teaching and learning.

She was awarded an AM for contributions in this area in the Illawarra. Christine has also worked in the NSW Government Senior Executive Service as General Manager, Planning & Innovation in the NSW Department of Education.

She has served on numerous national committees including the National Health & Medical Research Council and Australian Universities Teaching Committee and CUTSD, the predecessors of ALTC.

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

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