

June /July 2009

Research News

Southern Cross
UNIVERSITY

DIVISION OF RESEARCH

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Research Directions



Professor Neal Ryan
P V-C (Research)

Welcome to the Division of Research June/July update.

It is an important time for University research in Australia with the introduction of some new initiatives. Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) is being implemented and the beginnings of Senator Carr's 'hubs and spokes' model of research has received funding. An important program for SCU announced in the last budget, was the *Collaborative Research Networks Program*. The program has the objective of building research excellence in small and regional universities through collaboration with larger research-intensive universities. Although these objectives do not recognise research excellence that might already exist in small and regional universities, it does provide a source of funding that can be accessed by these universities. I encourage our research community to develop ideas to tap into this source of funding while we are awaiting further details of the program.

Measurement of our research performance as a university is not likely to change from the three main performance indicators: publications, grant income and doctoral completions. Data for the past 5 years indicate that the areas where SCU performs particularly well are: funding from local government; funding from Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs - where we excel), funding from industry, and HDR completions. As a university, we still have to increase our presence in **peer-reviewed** journals, which, in turn, lead to National Competitive Grants. However, I am confident that SCU is becoming more and more research intensive as our performance in the last round of ARC Linkage grants testifies.

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June Staff Profile

Sue White

Administrative Coordinator
Professional Doctorates Program



I commenced working at Southern Cross University in May 1998, after moving to the Far North Coast on completion of 20 years in the Royal Australian Navy. After initially working in the School of Social and Workplace Development, in undergraduate and postgraduate administration, I assumed the role of Administrator of the Doctor of Business Administration program within the Graduate College of Management in January 2002. This worked in perfectly with my life as I was fortunate enough to move both work and family (and pussy cats) to the Tweed region, since the DBA was offered from the newly commissioned Tweed Gold Coast Campus.

It was a great opportunity to be part of the team that saw the DBA flourish into a very successful program both within Australia and with our educational partners overseas. Probably the best aspect has been helping the candidates fulfill their dreams of completing their doctorates, meeting them at our bi-annual Doctoral Symposia during the many phases of their candidature and attending their graduation ceremonies at the completion of their studies.

I now look forward to being a member of the Division of Research Team, extending my knowledge of Research administration, and working with both PhD and Masters candidates, as well as the DBA's, in assisting them to their completions.

Research & Commercial Services

As the end of the financial year approaches, the usual rush to expend funding by many of our granting and client groups is keeping the Business Office busy assisting researchers and Centres get together proposals and arrangements by the 30th June. If you know of any impending requirement with any of your clients, please let us know as soon as possible.

A key focus of the RCSU this month is the first stage implementation of the Research Management System (RMS). The RMS will see Publications and Research Grants and Projects modules implemented this year and, in the near term, it will support the new ERA requirements from the Federal Government.

The next Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) round is also upon us since the Government has called for two rounds this year. SCU are likely to lead 2 bids (Transport BioEnergy and Food Security) and will partner with other consortiums in another 3-4 bids. The RCSU is providing bid management and support for the SCU lead bids.

Research Training

The RT unit is currently engaged in a major review and revision of rules and procedures, designed to both streamline and enhance quality assurance mechanisms for the examination of Higher Degree theses. The Guidelines for Incorporating Publications into Theses is one of the first being amended to address concerns from examiners. The new Guidelines have been approved by RRTAC and will go to Academic Board.

Sue White is now Secretary of Higher Degrees Research Committee and will be working with Phil Hayward in planning for the integration of the Professional Doctorates (PD) Committee and PD management system into the Higher Degrees Research Committee and Research Training Unit system. This integration is due to commence in August. The HDRC is now a sub-committee of Academic Board responsible for all HDR matters and advising Academic Board on the University's quality assurance with respect to research training.

A revised set of HDR Rules (PhD, Masters by Thesis) and new PhD Qualifying and Masters Qualifying Rules has now been ratified by University Council. These new standards have been posted on the University website. The changes include new Rules for Appeals processes, Confirmation of Candidature, and Examination process.

New procedures for membership, appointment and duties for members of the Higher Degree Research Committee are currently being discussed and are intended to be implemented shortly.

Ethics

Professor Bill Boyd, Chair of Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) and Animal Care & Ethics Committee (ACEC)

It is almost one year since I took over the Chair of the University's two ethics committees. I have become immersed in the State and Federal government requirements for research ethics review and approval. One person chairing both committees is a departure for the University and allows the potential to develop both committees in the light of each other's experience. HREC continues to dominate in terms of the volume of business, although there is a growing interest in ACEC business.

Part of my efforts as Chair of both Committees has focused on continual quality development, with an ongoing examination of both processes and the forms we use; it was particularly necessary to revise the ACEC forms and ACEC members are making good progress towards this. Other matters arising include the need to consider ethics review of multi-site research; (there is a national discussion about improving the efficiency of ethics review that has a bearing on a small part of SCU's research endeavour.)

There is a growing interest in the intersection of research ethics review and the University's curriculum, with grey areas that concern project-based learning, coursework in which human or animal participants are involved, and teaching and learning quality management survey.

I am working with the Teaching & Learning Centre in developing an ALTC grant submission in this topic and the University has received encouragement from national ethics bodies for this. Much of my work outside the application review process has concerned training and development. Although I have not yet run many major training events, I have introduced the ethics review process to various groups around the University, and individually mentored many students and staff through the process.

My ultimate goal is to continue the work of previous Chairs in developing a cultural of ethical practice at the University, in which we provide an effective and facilitative system that protects the participants of our scholarly activities, our researchers and educators, and the institution itself, and continues to the development of the highest quality research and teaching at SCU.

Office of Regional Engagement

ORE is a unit based in the Division of Research working to support staff to ensure an integrated whole-of-university approach to University-Community engagement. It embraces over-lapping paradigms - Engaged Scholarship and Community Service:

Engaged Scholarship grows knowledge and is largely an academic endeavour, and occurs when the teaching and learning, and the research and discovery activities of the University contribute a mutual benefit to the broader community, a particular community-of-interest and satisfy staff and student needs.

Community Service is a conscious corporate social responsibility and can come in many forms, from an increased use of University facilities by the community, to academic and non-academic staff and students contributing to the community in various ways including serving on community committees, boards, club, offering advice, being mentors and other activities.

ORE acts as a **clearing house**, so effective **communication** is extremely important internally and with external stakeholders. This is undertaken through personal contact, monthly electronic staff updates, items included in the University monthly discoverSCU newsletters and website, the hard copy What's on@SCU, the ORE website (<http://engagement.scu.edu.au>), staff meetings and meetings with regional partners.

ORE **facilitates and monitors partnerships** established with specific interests in the broader community with staff and students, and maintains close contact with University/regional MOU signatories. ORE nurtures appropriate connectivity between government at all levels, regional agencies in specific areas of interest, business, community groups and individuals, and seeks to ensure there are productive relationships to enhance the university's teaching and research capacity and grow the prosperity of the region.

ORE Contacts:

Lismore Campus Dr Ros Derrett OAM Head, Office of Regional Engagement P: (02) 6620 3150 M: 0439 526544 E: ros.derrett@scu.edu.au	Tweed/Gold Coast Airport Centre: Lisa Francisco - Engagement Facilitator P: (07) 5506 9375 E: lisa.francisco@scu.edu.au
Lismore Campus: Justin St Vincent Welch - Engagement Facilitator P: (02) 6626 9250. E: justin.stvincentwelch@scu.edu.au	Coffs Harbour Campus: Sue Pratten - Engagement Facilitator P: (02) 6659 3199 E: sue.pratten@scu.edu.au
Lismore Campus Donna McIntyre - Business Manager P: (02) 6620 3503 E: donna.mcintyre@scu.edu.au	Coffs Harbour Campus Jan Strom - Engagement Facilitator P: (02) 6659 3900 E: jan.strom@scu.edu.au

Excellence in Research Australia

The ERA Evaluation Guidelines and Indicator Benchmark Methodology are now available on the ARC website. These documents provide guidance on the evaluation of research outputs and outlines the sources, dates and calculations that the ARC will use to derive the benchmarks for the ERA trial.

The final journal lists for Physical, Chemical and Physical Sciences (Cluster1) and Humanities and Creative Arts are available from the ARE web site. <http://www.arc.gov.au/era/trial.htm>

- 2009 ERA Trial Timeline Update - Physical, Chemical & Earth Sciences
Cluster 1 – open now till 3rd July 2009.
- Humanities & Creative Arts
Cluster 2 – submissions open 3rd August and closes 21st August 2009.

- ARC to release - a) Trial Cluster 1 assessment – November 2009
- b) Trail Cluster 2 assessment – December 2009.

The ARC will review all journal lists prior to the 2010 ERA implementation. A new journal form will need to be completed in order to request consideration of addition of a new journal or change of status of an existing journal. Please contact Wendy Scott for further information.

Southern Cross GeoScience is a Special Research Centre located in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Southern Cross University and is a world leader in land and water research and management. Southern Cross GeoScience conducts fundamental, strategic, and applied research that contributes to a better understanding and improved management of land and water resources with particular reference to the impacts of human activity. The Directors of SCGS are Professor Richard Bush and Professor Leigh Sullivan who lead a team of 16 Post-Doctoral Fellows and Research Associates, 10 PhD students, and three administrative staff.

Southern Cross GeoScience undertakes research in a wide range of geoscience disciplines including:

- Acid sulfate soils processes, assessment and the development of sustainable management practices;
- The geochemistry of sulfur and iron and selected trace elements (e.g. arsenic) in both terrestrial and aquatic environments;
- Terrestrial carbon sequestration especially via the enhanced production of phytolith occluded carbon in vegetation;
- The geoscience of floodplain landscapes including water quality, geomorphology, hydrology, and the mobilisation of nutrients and pollutants within these landscapes,
- The development of sustainable agriculture that includes consideration of the whole food supply system, and;
- Theoretical and applied geochemistry of carbonates in both terrestrial and aquatic environments.

All inquiries contact Professor Leigh Sullivan (Director, Southern Cross Geoscience – email: leigh.sullivan@scu.edu.au)

Website: The Division of Research regularly updates the website. It provides all the latest research news and forms, as well as a link to this newsletter. The website is: <http://www.scu.edu.au/research/college>

Calendar – June/July 2009

Research Committee Meeting Dates

Higher Degree Research Committee	12 th June, 2009	+	10 th July, 2009
Research and Research Training Advisory Committee	26 th June, 2009	+	24 th July, 2009
Human Research Ethics Committee	22 nd June, 2009	+	3 rd August, 2009
Animal Care & Ethics Committee	30 th June, 2009	+	11 th August, 2009

Research Grant Opportunities

For all current grants available through the **Australian Competitive Grants** Register, go to: http://www.innovation.gov.au/ScienceAndResearch/programs_funding/Pages/AustralianCompetitiveGrantsRegister.aspx

Australian Research Council (ARC) grant information is available at: <http://www.arc.gov.au/ncgp/default.htm>

National Health & Medical Research Council (NHMRC) grant information is available at: <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/index.htm>

PhD Scholarships – CRC Contamination Assessment & Remediation of the Environment (CARE)

Southern Cross GeoScience (SCGS) is a Special Research Centre at Southern Cross University that conducts research that improves our understanding and management of our land and water resources with particular reference to the impact of human activities. SCGS has received funding from CRC CARE to undertake the following two research projects requiring PhD students:

Project 1) assessment of the acidity hazard of acid sulfate soil materials,

Project 2) geochemical processes in iron-rich tropical acid sulfate soils.

Contact Professor Leigh Sullivan (leigh.sullivan@scu.edu.au) or Professor Richard Bush (Richard.bush@scu.edu.au) in Southern Cross GeoScience

Professional Development Opportunities

The Division of Research is pleased to announce a series of workshops being offered over the next few months, covering a wide range of information and skill development opportunities for staff and research students alike.

Qualitative research methods Thursday 18th June 10am-1pm Invercauld House (lunch provided) and Thursday 25th June 2pm-5pm Coffs Harbour. Facilitated by visiting Professor Barbara Pini from Curtin University, the workshop will offer tips on a range of qualitative research methods for all researchers. For Lismore, contact Louise Gordon louise.gordon@scu.edu.au for Coffs, contact Deb Hoiles at deborah.hoiles@scu.edu.au for registrations.

Publishing your research Friday 26th June 9am-11am Coffs Harbour Presented by visiting Professor Barbara Pini from Curtin University, the workshop will offer tips on publishing. Contact Deb Hoiles at deborah.hoiles@scu.edu.au for registrations.

Supervisor Professional Development Workshop Friday 26th June 9am-3pm Invercauld House (lunch provided) Covers processes and procedures that supervisors need to know as well as opportunities to share experiences with other supervisors. Contact Kath Fisher at kath.fisher@scu.edu.au for registrations.

Mid-year Orientation Refresher Friday 17th July 9am-5pm Invercauld House (lunch, morning and afternoon tea provided). A shortened version of the 3-day February program, open to all postgraduates. Contact Fionnuala McCabe at fionnuala.mccabe@scu.edu.au for registrations.

Seven secrets of highly successful PhD students Monday 20th July Invercauld House 9am-12 (lunch provided) Presented by experts from Flinders University, this course will describe the key habits that will make a difference not only to how quickly and easily you can complete your PhD, but also how to reduce stress and increase pleasure! Contact Kath Fisher at kath.fisher@scu.edu.au for registrations.

Turbocharge your writing Tuesday 21st July 9am-12 Invercauld House (lunch provided). Presented by experts from Flinders University, the course offers clear, practical and learnable strategies that can greatly increase writing productivity for research students and staff. Contact Kath Fisher at kath.fisher@scu.edu.au for registrations.

Grants writing for social science Thursday 20th August 9.30am-12.30pm Invercauld House (lunch provided). Facilitated by Prof. Phil Hayward, covers tips and realities in applying for ARC grants in the arts and social sciences

Word Workshop Friday 21st August 10.30-1pm Coffs Harbour. Covers setting up a thesis template; creating styles; generating tables of contents, lists of figures and tables; copying styles between documents; creating master documents in Word 2007. Contact Kath Fisher at kath.fisher@scu.edu.au for registrations.

Media Training: These two hour sessions hosted by the SCU Media team will provide a general overview of the SCU Media Unit and how we can assist with media releases and other communication, how the media works and preparation and interview techniques. The sessions are designed for academic staff and researchers who come into contact with the media as part of their work with SCU. Requests to attend the media training should be sent to brigid.veale@scu.edu.au or phone 83006. Other media training sessions can be scheduled on request.

Coffs Harbour, June 16, 10am to noon

SCU Riverside, June 23, 10am to noon

Lismore, September 22, 10am to noon

If you are interested in attending any of the above workshops, please reply to the relevant staff member collecting registration information as indicated. Reminders will be sent out closer to the dates of each workshop. A full year's calendar of workshops and training opportunities will soon be available on the Division of Research website.

Division of Research Contacts:

Office of Pro Vice-Chancellor(Research)

Professor Neal Ryan, PVC(R) – Ph: 6620 3719 – Email: neal.ryan@scu.edu.au

Louise Gordon, Personal Assistant to PVC(R) – Ph: 6620 3172 – Email: louise.gordon@scu.edu.au

Judi Summers, Executive Officer / Secretary Research Advisory Committee– Ph: 6620 3809 – Email: judi.summers@scu.edu.au

Dr Lyndon Brooks, Research Methodologist – Ph: 6620 3965 – Email: Lyndon.brooks@scu.edu.au

Margaret Rolfe, Statistician – Ph: 6620 3394 – Email: Margaret.rolfe@scu.edu.au

Research & Commercial Services Unit

Steve Williams, Director – Ph: 6620 3458 – Email: Stephen.williams@scu.edu.au

Carolyn Piercy, Administration Manager – Ph: 6626 9471 – Email: Carolyn.piercy@scu.edu.au

Kate Breen, Project Manager, Research Services – Ph: 6620 3485 – Email: kate.breen@scu.edu.au

Joan Waterford, Project Manager, Research Services

Jackie Hudson, Administrative Assistant – Ph: 6626 9361 – Email: Jacqueline.hudson@scu.edu.au

Robyn Anderson, Manager, Research Admin & Finance – Ph: 6620 3705 – Email: robyn.anderson@scu.edu.au

Margaret McNeil, Project Officer, RMS – Ph: 6626 9147 – Email: Margaret.mcneil@scu.edu.au

Wendy Scott, Project Officer, ERA – Ph: 6626 9371 – Email: wendy.scott@scu.edu.au

Sue Kelly, Ethics – Ph: 6626 9139 – Email: sue.kelly@scu.edu.au

Research Training Unit Contacts

Professor Phil Hayward, Director, Research Training – Ph: 6626 9186 – Email: Philip.hayward@scu.edu.au

Sandra Guthrie, Personal Assistant to Director, Research Training – Ph: 6620 3520 – Email: Sandra.guthrie@scu.edu.au

Dr Kath Fisher, Assoc Director, Research Training – Ph: 6620 3473 – Email: kath.fisher@scu.edu.au

Fionnuala McCabe, Student Liaison Officer/Examinations Officer – Ph: 6620 3414 – Email: fionnuala.mccabe@scu.edu.au

Anne Hart, Student Liaison/Administration – Ph: 6626 9113 – Email: anne.hart@scu.edu.au

Sue White, Admin Coordinator, Research & Doctoral Programmes / Secretary, Higher Degrees Research Committee – Ph: 07 5506 9303 – Email: sue.white@scu.edu.au

General Information: We welcome any contributions staff would like to make to *Research News*, especially identifying opportunities to engage in collaborative projects, to join in with joint research proposals or to inform staff of other research opportunities which might exist. *Research News* will provide one means of communicating research across the university.

If you wish to contribute to future *Research News*, or have suggestions on how to improve the way in which we inform staff and students on research activity, please contact Judi Summers – judi.summers@scu.edu.au, or phone 02 6620 3809