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Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Region)
Victoria University, Melbourne
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CHASS President Linda Rosenman welcomed members to the Council's member's function at Griffith University in Brisbane in June. The function offered an opportunity for members to meet with the CHASS board and secretariat and to informally discuss advocacy issues, ideas and programs.

I'd like to extend a warm welcome to our members who have joined us here this evening, and to thank the many people here who have contributed to the success of the Council's work in promoting and advocating for the humanities, arts and social sciences.

I would like to particularly welcome Professor Brad Haseman and Luke Jaaniste of the Queensland University of Technology, who co-authored the CHASS Occasional Paper #7 - *The arts and Australia's national innovation system 1994 – 2008* - which was published earlier this year. This paper has already been picked up by groups working on new arts funding models and has received significant media attention.

The Council would also like to thank Griffith University for host our quarterly Board meeting, and for the opportunity to meet with and talk to the Queensland based membership. The Council has a strong attachment to Queensland, with our vice-President Professor Ross Homel AO and Board member Stuart Cunningham both Brisbane-based.

The universities and educational institutions, collecting institutions and arts organisations in this state are leaders in the drive to build this country's capacity and strength, which are crucial to guiding Australia out of the current economic turmoil and into a new era. The Queensland state government has also been a leader in recognizing the role of the creative industries in innovation and growth.

If we are to realise the innovative, knowledgeable and resilient society we aim for, your work must be recognized and utilized by policy makers and the community as a whole. Queensland is motivated and well on the way to a knowledge based economy and will be taking an active part in the national sphere.

I believe we have come a long way since the Council embarked on its work in 2004.

Back then Humanities, Arts and Social Science researchers were excluded from a range of research grants and fellowships. There was a lack of understanding about the quality and impact of our research.

The Prime Ministers Science Engineering and Innovation Council was purely scientific and technologically based.

The long running culture wars skewed public understanding of the contribution of the humanities, arts and social sciences to the communication and knowledge of important social, cultural, economic and environmental changes in society.

Arts were considered an optional add on, rather than a vital source of creative energy.

Things began to change as the Council's work began to gather some momentum.

PMSEIC appointed a humanist, Professor Graeme Turner, as a member.

Over 2008 we saw major movement as the new Rudd Government began implementing its policies, and launched wide-ranging reviews of policies relating to higher education, innovation, research training, and other areas of social and economic policy.

The crucial role of the HASS sector was recognised by these reviews. We can now access the research funding that had been explicitly closed to us through, for example, the Cooperative Research Centres. The door is also

open for discussion about how to structure the new research funding programs that were announced in the budget.

2009 is proving another big year as the Australian Government makes and implements its new education and innovation policies. I believe our sector has already made a powerful contribution to the understanding of the considerable challenges before the country, but more can be done to ensure the voice of the sector continues to be heard.

At the Council, we have two main priorities:

Firstly, we must continue to respond to the pace of change in policy by coordinating views and relevant knowledge in our membership and bringing it to the attention of policy makers.

Secondly, we are working through strategic plans and looking at how to make CHASS more effective. We have come a long way in achieving our first set of goals around getting access for HASS in Federal education, arts and innovation policy. Now is the time to set a second agenda, to ensure we use this access to contribute to public debate and Australian society.

We need more investment in our sector, and we need to use CHASS's resources to identify key issues and coordinate our membership in taking our knowledge and skills out into public debate.

We have started a first project in bringing together information about the work of social and educational researchers in the *Creating Capable Students* project. We believe that if the Government is to achieve its target of 20 per cent participation from lower socio-economic groups in higher education by 2020 and 40% with a tertiary qualification, it needs to look at its family, early childhood and school policies as well as university-based community outreach programs. We also believe the social science research community can aid in evaluating and tracking progress in implementing the policies.

I hope this is the first of many more projects for the Council around knowledge translation.

We will also be taking an active role in the Excellence in Research in Australia developments and research infrastructure. CHASS will support its members as they work to promote the study of languages in school and universities, and in seeking major change in arts funding and investment in the creative industries.

In response to feedback from our members we have also spent quite a lot of time in a review of our membership and governance structures. We have aimed to develop a membership structure that is transparent, logical, clears up some of the anomalies, and, we are hoping, will be revenue neutral. We will be writing to all member organisations regarding this in the next few weeks. In terms of governance, Mallesons has agreed to provide pro bono advice on proposed governance and constitutional changes which we will be put forward at the next Annual General Meeting in October. Many of these necessary and time consuming activities are central to our accountability to you, our members.

We are also working to build a new three year Strategic Plan for CHASS, and the input of our membership is vital. We will be asking you to nominate your priorities and issues as we send our membership notices in the next couple of months.

Finally, I would like to announce that after a one year hiatus, HASS on the Hill is back, with an exciting and packed program. Please mark your diaries for October 27th and 28th.

Thank you all for coming.

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