

## March 2008

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### *Workshop: The Arts, and the Innovation Agenda*

CHASS is running a one-day workshop at the Sydney Theatre Company on Monday 31 March. It will consider how the Arts sector can engage in the innovation agenda.

The Government has opened up new possibilities, but how can the Arts sector gain access to possible sources of funding and influence? What is in the Government's mind, and what it is willing to support?

\$17 million has been promised for a new Creative Industries Innovation Centre, but who can participate? How will the money be allocated?

Minister Kim Carr is conducting a review of the Innovation system in Australia, "critical to Australia's national future." What part do the Arts play in innovation?

Speakers and sessions include:

- Arts Minister Peter Garrett (tbc)
- Ms Narelle Kennedy, from the National Innovation System Review
- Ms Julie Dyson, the ArtsPeak perspective
- Professor John Hartley, the man behind the QUT Creative Industries Precinct
- Professor Brad Hasemen, 15 years of Arts policy: what can we learn?
- Ms Jane Haley, linking art and business through AbAF
- Professor Su Baker, ACUADS, the tertiary councils respond

This is an all-day meeting with an optional dinner that night. [Registration is now open.](#)

## *The PhD in the humanities, arts and social sciences*

Registrations have closed (over-subscribed) for our [one-day workshop on the future of the PhD](#) in the humanities, arts and social sciences.

Issues for our sector include the imminent retirement of many academics of the 'baby boomer' generation: how will the impending vacancies be filled?

The stipend for Australian Postgraduate Awards has dropped below reasonable levels, especially in the face of the strong economy and job market. The Government has promised more APA awards: should they instead spend the money on increasing the stipend?

Monash University has improved completion rates, reduced attrition, and cut completion times. Denise Cuthbert will describe how (see her article in this week's Campus Review).

The workshop is being supported by the Group of 8, the Innovative Research Universities of Australia, Universities Australia, and the Australian Technology Network.

## *Portrait of a PhD graduate*

Also at the PhD Workshop: Mark Western and Alan Lawson will present new data from a study of recent graduates from Group of 8 universities. In comparison to their colleagues from science, HASS graduates are:

- Much more likely to be female
- Much more likely to be part time students
- Significantly older
- Take slightly longer to complete
- Undertake PhDs more for love than money
- Get less formal instruction and assistance from their supervisor
- Are somewhat less likely to be currently working
- Much more likely to be working in universities and in government jobs upon completion

[Abstracts of all the talks](#) have been posted to the CHASS website.

At the end of the workshop, we are planning to write to the Minister with recommendations on how the value of the PhD can be improved.

### *ERA: research assessment takes shape*

Minister Kim Carr has won praise from all quarters over his plans for a streamlined replacement for the RQF.

Details of the new Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) will be revealed in an issues paper expected mid-March. What we know now is that the process will involve a combination of metrics and peer review.

ERA begins in 2009, and will be administered by the Australian Research Council (ARC). Disciplines will be divided into 8 clusters, with humanities and creative arts; and social, behavioural and economic sciences forming two separate clusters.

In responding to the Minister's announcement, I asked that the humanities, arts and social sciences should be considered early in a process likely to stretch out for several years. We do not want to be shunted to the end of the queue when some of the initial enthusiasm for reform may have dissipated!

"Our sector remembers what happened with the initial run at National Research Priorities, when a staggered process that started with the natural sciences somehow didn't get around to the promised focus on the human and social sciences." ([CHASS media release](#))

It is also important that the diversity of our sector be recognized in this process: some of our disciplines have very well established traditions of research and well-formed measures of quality, while others are still working on those measures.

### *The Innovation Review: workshops and submissions*

Further details have emerged on "a wide ranging review of Australia's national innovation system" announced by Minister Kim Carr last month.

The HASS sector has a number of opportunities to inject ideas into a review which will help shape Government programs.

Workshops are being held around Australia, beginning in Brisbane on Monday 3 March and concluding in Canberra on Monday 17 March.

As well, written submissions are invited (closing date 30 April); and an issues paper has been released.

All details - dates and times of workshops, the issues paper and the submission process - are available at [The Innovation, Industry, Science and Research website](#)

Narelle Kennedy, Chief Executive of the independent think tank the Australian Business Foundation, is a member of the Review Panel. She is speaking at the CHASS workshop "[The Arts, and the Innovation Agenda](#)" in Sydney on 31 March.

### *Meeting parliamentarians: dates for 2008*

The Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences on the Hill (HOTH) event will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, 3-4 September.

It will be an opportunity for all CHASS Members - from research, education and practice - to send representatives to Canberra to tell their story to members of Parliament.

Some comments from last year's participants:

"I was a bit nervous before [meeting my MP] as it was a new experience for me. However, once I got into the meeting I was able to rise to the occasion. It was exciting to come out feeling that we had made a difference."

"Loved all the venues. It was a thrill to be at the Press Club, and all the other locations. Very pleasurable and instructive."

"I especially appreciated the practical opportunities to 'learn through doing' such as having one's 'pitch' trailed and evaluated ... The networking opportunities were also extremely valuable - being with like-minded colleagues who are all concerned to offer their skills for the national good was very special and encouraging. And hearing politicians from both sides of Parliament address us as a collective was very significant and revealing."

Information will be progressively posted to the CHASS web site.

### *New members*

I would like to welcome as a new Member:

- [Ceres Solutions](#)

Any organisation interested in supporting our efforts is welcome to join CHASS. We have a variety of membership levels, with annual subscriptions ranging from \$220 to \$8,800. Please speak to our staff on (02) 6201 2740; or see [Membership](#).

Regards

Stuart Cunningham

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