

May 2008

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### *1. New "Fields of Research" codes replace RFCD*

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has completed its review of the ASRC, and the new Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification ([ANZSRC](#)) codes have replaced the old RFCD.

The ARC and ABS announced on March 31 that they would conduct a joint roadshow in Australian capital cities during May to raise awareness and understanding of the ANZSRC in the higher education sector.

Some meetings have been postponed. The Roadshow is scheduled to visit Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Perth during May and June, but the ARC is awaiting the release of the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) Consultation Paper before confirming dates.

It seems the purpose of the sessions is to discuss the ERA Consultation paper and the implementation of the new ANZSRC.

### *2. The Prime Minister, the 2020 summit and the Innovation Review*

*"This false divide between the arts and science, between the arts and industry, between the arts and the economy: we've actually got to put that to bed. As if creativity is somehow this thing which only applies to the arts, and innovation is this thing over here which applies uniquely to the sciences, or technology, or to design.*

*"This is actually again a false dichotomy: it's just not like that. Our ambition should be to create and to foster a creative imaginative Australia because so much of the economy of the twenty-first century is going to require that central faculty."*

(Kevin Rudd, closing address to the 2020 Conference, Canberra 20 April 2008)

CHASS welcomes this statement. As we said in our [submission to the Innovation Review](#):

*Modern policy has to transcend the artificial division separating the natural from the human and social sciences. Historically, the role and contribution of the humanities, arts and social sciences have been minimised. The divide has damaging consequences: it erects funding and administrative barriers to cross-disciplinary collaborations; nurtures policy settings that place too much emphasis on the natural sciences to generate solutions and new industries; and skews research investment in a national economy where 80 per cent of employment lies in the services industries...*

Our submission called for greater access to advisory committees and funding programs for the humanities, arts and social sciences. Examples are the R&D Tax concession and membership of the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council.

### *3. PhD scholarship: five point plan to Government*

In March, CHASS convened a [workshop](#) aiming to improve the value of a PhD in the humanities, arts and social sciences. We wanted to explore how the PhD might be modernised in terms of the experience it offers and the value to the community of the qualification.

I subsequently wrote to Ministers Julia Gillard and Kim Carr with a [five-point plan](#) to improve the PhD, areas our participants identified as appropriate for action by Government.

Participants also identified six further areas for action by universities. The full list of areas for improvement has been posted to our web site.

One pressing matter is to increase how much we pay our students. The value of the scholarship has declined sharply as a proportion of average weekly earnings, and this year dropped below the Henderson Poverty Line. The [graph](#) is on our web site (and our thanks to [CAPA](#) for their assistance in creating this graph).

### *4. The Budget*

Good news for the tertiary sector in the Budget are the Education Investment Fund (EIF) of \$11 billion, and the special one-off Better Universities Renewal Fund of \$500 million. BURF (wonderful acronym!) is earmarked for capital expenditure on facilities to support teaching, research and student amenities.

The Government has funded its pre-election commitments on fellowships and scholarships, doubling the number of postgraduate scholarships for higher degree research students by 2012. [CHASS thinks](#) consideration might have been given to using some of this funding to boost the value of the scholarship.

The Future Fellowships program was confirmed. It offers 1,000 Australian and international mid-career researchers four-year fellowships of up to \$140,000 a year, with top-up funding to support infrastructure and equipment.

The Arts sector is steady as she goes, with some small but welcome increases (resale royalty rights, funds for young and emerging artists, funding for Screen Australia and the National Film and Sound Archive).

Much of the action in the tertiary sector is anticipated to occur in the next Budget, in May 2009. By then the Innovation Review, the Bradley Review of Higher Education, and the House of Representatives inquiry into research training and workforce issues in Australian universities will all be complete, and the Government will have all the evidence it needs to frame new policies.

### *5. Extending the role of the social sciences and humanities in public policy research*

The fourth CHASS research paper will be launched on Tuesday 20 May, at 9.45 am.

[Rigor and Relevance](#) argues that Australia is failing to capitalize on the ability of its researchers in the most fundamental area: their power to solve problems.

It proposes a three-prong strategy to encourage this research. The everyday problems such work tackles include city transport; welfare in aboriginal communities; climate change; housing affordability, and healthy lifestyles. Much of this work depends on a collaborative approach.

As CHASS President Stuart Cunningham says in a [media release](#): "We need to support a new form of research, one that is strategically-driven, problem oriented and cross-disciplinary in nature.

Email [Mel Lamprecht](#) if you would like to attend.

### *6. "Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences on the Hill"*

HOTH is an opportunity for people involved in research, education and practise to make the case for their work directly to federal Members of Parliament.

It's a two-day event in Canberra, this year in springtime on 2-3 September.

HOTH features lunch at the National Press Club, a Briefing Day at the National Gallery of Australia and dinner at Parliament House, as well as one-on-one meetings with MPs. We will advise newsletter readers when registrations are open.

Some comments from last year's participants:

I thought the program was well packed: interesting, focussed, busy enough. The first panel: the lobbyist, the staffer and the politician were all good value, and the 60 second, sudden-death exercise was just the early shock we needed.

I think it's a fantastic initiative. Well worth the considerable effort.

Special mention must also be made to the organisation and administration of the event which was fantastic

### *7. Election of the Board: the Search Committee*

The election of the 2008-09 CHASS Board will be held at the AGM later this year.

We are establishing a Search Committee to consider the composition of the new Board, and now invite Members and friends of CHASS to put forward suggestions of possible new Board Members including the position of President.

Do you have any suggestions? Please send the names of suitable persons to sit on the CHASS Board (and an optional 100 word statement about them), for consideration by the Search Committee.

This should be emailed either to [Toss Gascoigne](#) or to CHASS President [Stuart Cunningham](#).

Two or three Members of the [current Board](#) (plus the President) will step down this year.

Board Members are elected for one year. The expectation is that they will serve two or three years, subject to being re-elected each year. They are elected in their own right and not as representatives of any institution or organisation.

The role of the Search Committee is to recommend a balanced slate of candidates to the AGM. This slate will be advised about 3 weeks before the AGM at which time formal nominations of these candidates for election to the Board will be made.

It is then still open for any Member Organisation to formally nominate other candidates for the Board.

### *8. CHASS [Membership](#) continues to grow*

I would like to welcome as a new Member:

- [Taylor & Francis Australia](#)

And two other applications have been lodged and approved:

- Cooperative Research Centres Association
- National Gallery of Australia

Organisations active in the humanities, arts and social sciences and interested in supporting our efforts are 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 our [web site](#).

Regards

Stuart Cunningham

*18 May 2008*

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For more information, please contact:

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