

CHASS NEWS

Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences

17 March 2010

Avenues of knowledge exchange

Universities perform a quarter of Australia's total research, including 84 per cent of our pure basic research and 82 per cent of our research in the humanities, arts and social sciences.

If research and development is to drive growth and innovation, these broad figures from the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research underline the importance of building networks for knowledge exchange between university-based research teams and the organisations and professions based on humanities, arts and the social sciences.

Perhaps the most obvious existing links are in commercial sector businesses which source new economic and finance knowledge, often through recruitment of graduates equipped with both understanding of new developments and good communications skills, to ensure they can bring this knowledge into their new environment. At this month's Universities Australia conference, business leader Jillian Broadbent AO emphasised that this flow of fresh talent, together with post graduate training for industry based students, was the primary focus of business when looking at universities. UNSW Vice Chancellor Professor Fred Hilmer AO reinforced the message, but noted that universities tended to focus more on research project relationships.

The HASS sector is increasingly exploring alternate ways of disseminating and translating research.

In the non-profit sector it is more difficult for businesses and organisations to access university-based research, except where there is Government support which links both community and public sector organisations around a quest for new understanding of social policy, health policy or environmental issues. CHASS's paper, [Creating Capable Students](#), draws together recent research around social inclusion in education, demonstrating well-formed linkages in parts of the social sciences and a way forward in the translation between knowledge and action.

In the traditional humanities, universities are the custodians of the academic disciplines and the transfer of knowledge to students in the arts and humanities faculties and to the broader community through books and articles. More recently humanities scholars have been using their research to guide and inform film and TV drama and documentary projects. New disciplines, including cultural studies, have a more clearly defined industry link through the creative industries.

For the creative arts, growth and interest from cultural agencies like the Australia Council for the Arts has been growing in recent years to the extent that the Australia Council is an active partner in Australian Research

Council projects. A number of the arts organisations are reaping the benefits of evidence based research in policy areas, while also gaining access to the knowledge created in the new practice based research areas.

A quick look at allocations of funding at the national research agency, the Australian Research Council, shows that about 23 per cent of its funding goes to HASS. These figures are based on an average over the years 2002 to 2008, with a total of \$123,654,238 allocated in 2008 across the range of languages and cultural areas to librarianship, policy and political studies to behavioural sciences. In 2010, about 1.7 per cent of research funding in the ARC Discovery Program was allocated to the creative arts.

Helen O'Neil

Executive Director

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The Council would like to thank Dr Astrid Wootton who retires from the Board this month. As the Director of the Design Centre Tasmania and a member of Australian Craft and Design Centres, the national peak body for craft and design, Astrid has been a valuable contributor to building links between design researchers and designers in industry and non-profit arts.

Design Research Mapping Project

The Council's advisory committee for its [Design Research Mapping Project](#) met in February to discuss how to build a strong evidence base for design as a driver of innovation.

Social sciences for maths education

On March 10, CHASS and ASSA issued a [joint media release](#) welcoming the Group of Eight's *Review of Education in Mathematics, Data Science and Quantitative Disciplines*, and supporting action to boost the statistical and mathematical literacy in Australia.

Research Workforce Strategy

CHASS continues to play an active part in the reference group on the Research Workforce Strategy. The DIISR team developing the Research Workforce Strategy is developing new information and analytic tools to look at demand for researchers and the career pathways for academic and industry based researchers. The Australian Government is working towards the release of a discussion paper mid-year.

OECD innovation strategy

CHASS contributed to the consultation on the OECD innovation strategy, through the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research. CHASS Executive Director Helen O'Neil spoke about the necessity of promoting social innovation alongside business innovation, to encourage public acceptance of new technologies and ways of doing things, and to enhance the capabilities and skills of Australian workplaces.

National Curriculum

CHASS Vice-President Professor Sue Willis attended a workshop on the national curriculum at the University of Melbourne.

HASS at a glance

Calling creative professionals

The Creative Industries Innovation Centre (CIIC) [launched its new website](#) for creative professionals this month.

International Research Collaboration

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Innovation is currently undertaking an inquiry into Australia's international research collaboration. This inquiry is examining existing international research collaborations; what drives international research collaboration at the government, institutional and researcher levels; current impediments to and strategies to support international research engagement; and the benefits to Australia from engaging in international research collaborations. Submissions to this inquiry closed in late January, and are now available on the [APH website](#). Last week, the Co-operative Research Centres Association's Michael Hartmann appeared at a public hearing of the inquiry.

Go8 Review

On March 10, the Go8 released its [Review of Education in Mathematics, Data Science and Quantitative Disciplines](#). This review confirms the importance of a strong mathematics education as the basis for the statistical and quantitative analysis at the heart of many social science disciplines, and revealed that the demand for mathematics and statistics graduates is predicted to grow by 3.5 per cent per year till 2013.

The National Library of Australia's Digital Collections *Trove*

The National Library of Australia launched its new flagship discovery service [Trove](#) late last year. *Trove* supports the discovery and annotation of items in Australian collections, including libraries, archives, university repositories and major online collections such as biographical databases, digitised book collections and digitised newspaper collections.

Australian Museum Eureka Prizes

Presented annually by the Australian Museum, the [Australian Museum Eureka Prizes](#) reward excellence in the fields of research and innovation.

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