

# CHASS NEWS

Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences

27 April 2010

## Editorial

In 2010 Australia will be debating the research workforce strategy to underpin the major growth planned for Australian tertiary education student enrolments. A successful workforce strategy is crucial for Australia to realise its ambitions as a knowledge economy, because researchers will be the key creators and translators of the knowledge produced in Australia and an important part of productivity growth for the future.

The CHASS executive committee recently looked at options for attracting Australia's best talent into academic research and teaching careers in the humanities, arts and social sciences. The executive members saw expansion and new funding for the Federal Research Training Scheme as vital. This scheme, already costing more than \$600 million, provides resources for the universities to support and supervise PhD students.

They also saw an urgent need for improvement of human resources management for early career researchers. Emerging from discussions with recent post graduates are the stories of casual work without prospects of contract or permanent work, lack of community recognition for the importance of research to Australia, and the very real understanding that many HASS graduates have an alternative of lucrative and satisfying career options outside tertiary education. With new funding coming into the university system over the next few years there are opportunities to address these challenges.

CHASS is a member of the reference group working with the Government to develop the discussion paper on the national strategy. The Council has asked a number of humanities, arts and social sciences researchers and former researchers to take an active part in focus groups and discussions about renewing and expanding the research workforce which have been a focus of the development of the evidence base for the strategic development. There is a real commitment to exploring and documenting the current challenges, and to build on the problems raised by reviews and parliamentary inquiries over 2009.

Figures showing that numbers of Australian students enrolling in PhDs are stagnant don't give confidence that the situation will turn around quickly: With a five to six year period of training for new and potential researchers the research workforce strategy will have to concentrate on medium to long term changes.

The [National Innovation Festival](#) begins this week and both creative arts and social sciences knowledge feature heavily among the hundreds of events featured in the program. The 2010 Festival aims to build sustainable businesses, recognising that understanding of human behaviour is crucial to successful change and creativity.

And in Queensland [Griffith University's Institute of Social and Behavioural Research](#) has been instrumental in bringing researchers, policy makers and on-the-ground practitioners together to share new knowledge about

youth violence and sexual abuse. The symposium was an Australian first for this area. Knowledge transfer is the key to making new social policy and programs truly evidence based and CHASS is interested to hear from more researchers and practitioners who are building programs for linking new knowledge with policy development. Griffith's [Jenny Wilson has an article](#) on the recent symposium which was based on the innovative research and practice at the University's Youth Forensic Service.

Helen O'Neil

Executive Director


Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences

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### **Creative Arts in the school curriculum**

CHASS and many of its member organisations have been invited to the launch of the initial advice paper on the shape and content of the creative arts curriculum. The Australian Curriculum and Assessment and Reporting Authority will host a discussion on the paper in May and Dr Mary Mooney of the University of Western Sydney's Centre for Educational Research will take part for the Council.

[National Advocates for Arts Education](#) will be meeting before the launch to discuss the paper, and CHASS will publish links to their recommendations and feedback as well as a link to the paper itself as soon as it is available. The [advice paper for the geography curriculum](#)  is also circulating among specialists before public release in June.

CHASS member Drama Australia has loaded a [special 'national curriculum' page](#) on its website. Click through to a PDF of unedited responses from teachers and researchers to five questions about the content and organizing structures of Drama in the national arts curriculum. These independent contributions capture diversity of voices that with a passion and commitment to making practice and knowledge of the creative arts part of learning in all Australian schools.

### **Research & Development Tax Incentive**

The Council has made a [further submission on the draft legislation](#) for the major new incentive to encourage small and medium sized businesses to invest in research and development. Although successive drafts have improved, the latest draft still has a specific exclusion for HASS R&D.

Dr Luke Jaaniste has written [an article about the R&D incentives](#), part of the Government's major commitment to reforming the national innovation system, and the need for more case studies and examples of HASS knowledge embedded in new products and services.

### **HASS at a glance**

#### **Creative Economy Report Card**

The ARC Centre for Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation says Australia's [creative sector is worth \\$31.1 billion](#) in 2007-08 and employs 487,000 individuals both within creative organisations and other industry and public institutions.

#### **Australian Humanities research centres to join international network**

Humanities research centre directors have agreed to set up an Australasian chapter of the [Consortium of Humanities Centres and Institutes](#). The directors met recently at Flinders University in a cheerful and productive discussion about how to support and inform the centres and their leadership. Robert Phiddian of the Flinders Humanities Research Centre will lead this initiative with a steering committee.

The aim of the group is to strengthen the network supporting research centre activity in the humanities - extending the itineraries of visiting scholars, providing support and information for research centre directors, advocating for improvements in the research environment, facilitating researcher swaps, etc. It will have regular events, working groups, and an active website that will be a clearing house of humanities research information. It will pursue links with international research groups through the CHCI international, and especially with the developing Asian chapter. It will play a small but distinctive role in advocating for research in the humanities among the representative organisations in the sector, CHASS, Australian Academy of the Humanities and the Council of Deans of Arts Social Sciences and Humanities.

The chapter's first major event is will be next year in July. Anyone with enquiries or opinions is welcome to contact:

Robert Phiddian - robert.phiddian [at] flinders.edu.au

Lisa Bennett - lisa.bennett [at] flinders.edu.au.

**Transforming Learning - new from Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council**

PMSEIC has released [Transforming Learning and the Transmission of Knowledge](#) - preparing a learning society for the future, a study which links new developments in neuroscience with education research. Recommendations include creation of a new Science of Learning Program, a campaign to boost prestige and appreciation of school teachers, and a rigorous evaluation of the current applications of digital technology employed in Australian learning settings.

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