AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL (ARC) FUNDING FOR 2005-2006

On the 9th November the Hon Dr Brendan Nelson, Minister for Education, Science and Training announced that 1214 new research projects would be funded by the Australian Government over the next five years. An allocation of $370 million has been made to fund these new projects which have been awarded after a rigorous peer review process along with the advice of the ARC.

2006 ARC Funding - Overall
For 2006 the average ARC grant is $305,000, which represents a 10.5% increase on last year’s average of $276,600.

In all there are 361 businesses and community agencies partnering universities in the Linkage Projects scheme. The partners have pledged a record contribution of $84.2 million, an increase from $80 million last year. Based on this level of contribution every $1 of Government Linkage funding leverages $1.44 in partnership support.

There are now 70 international partner countries increased from 68 last year. The USA and the UK continue to be countries we have the most links with, followed by Germany, Canada, China, Japan and France.

Fifty-two of the 194 Linkage Projects will benefit regional and rural areas. Of the total Linkage Projects’ $58.5 million budget, $21.2 million or 36% will go to projects benefiting regional and rural areas.

2006 ARC Funding – Murdoch University
For 2006, of the $370 million available ARC funding, Murdoch will receive 12 grants valued at $3,324,597. Total funding increased from $2,819,407 in 2005.
AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Professor Simon Mallal, Executive Director of the Centre for Clinical Immunology and Biomedical Statistics at Royal Perth Hospital is the 2005 winner of the Premier’s Prize for Achievement in Science. Professor Mallal is an HIV physician and immunologist who, with his team, has been internationally credited for making several key advances in HIV research, including the discovery that the HIV virus can mutate to avoid recognition by the immune system. This crucial discovery has received worldwide acclaim in the search for more effective vaccines against the deadly disease.

- Associate Professor Peter Irwin received the Australian Small Animal Veterinary Association (ASAVA) Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award made to a veterinarian who has rendered outstanding scientific contributions to small animal medicine and/or surgery. The award reflects Peter’s outstanding research work and publications in the area of emerging infectious and parasitic diseases of companion animals. He has been involved with the discovery of three exotic infections in Australia in the last few years - *Babesia gibsoni* infection, leishmaniasis and a new heartworm infection from Europe. In addition the ASAVA recognised his advisory role to organisations such as AQIS and the New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture.

- Ms Rhonda Marriott, Head of the School of Nursing won the Office of Aboriginal Health and the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Award in the category of *Excellence in Nursing*. The awards recognise innovative programs and individual efforts that contribute to the improvement of Aboriginal health. The various categories in the 2005 Aboriginal Health Awards also aim to acknowledge and promote excellence in the provision of health services to Aboriginal people by Aboriginal community controlled organisations and government sectors.

- The Chancellor, Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton has been appointed by His Excellency the Governor as a Trustee of the Western Australian Museum Board for a term expiring on 22nd June 2008.

- Murdoch University was ranked 13 in the second “The Melbourne Institute Index of the International Standing of Australian Universities”. This index was first produced in 2004 and has been updated to reflect more recent data. The index is constructed from 27 different attributes that are characteristics of world class universities, the main determinants are research performance and teaching standards. The University of Melbourne and the Australian National University tied for first place. The results of this index show the ordering of the universities is similar to the ranking in the global top 500 universities by Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

- Professor Yianni Attikionszel, Executive Dean of Science and Engineering, was appointed a Member of the Education and Assessment Committee of Engineers Australia, WA Division.

NOTABLE EVENTS

- The Hon Ljiljana Ravlich MLC, Minister for Education and Training, hosted a breakfast forum at Murdoch on 5th October 2005. She spoke on issues including the skills shortage and the new school training and leaving age of 17. I chaired the breakfast and strong representation from the Senior Executive ensured that the Minister and representatives from business and industry were made aware of issues of strategic importance for Murdoch.
• On the 22nd October 2005 the 5th annual Electrical Vehicle Challenge (eV Challenge) was hosted by the Division of Science and Engineering at the South Street Campus. The eV Challenge was established in 1999 and is aimed primarily at high school students to encourage them to participate in Science and Engineering via a specific project. The event increases the profile of Science and Engineering concepts. Over 35 individual teams from around Western Australia competed for the chequered flag which was awarded to the team whose vehicle travelled the greatest distance in 60 minutes. Competing teams were made up mainly of high school students and this year we also welcomed a series of private and corporate entries - EFI Automotives and DPS Engineering WA. This event has been invited to be a part of the 2005 Annual Perth Christmas Pageant.

• In 2004 the Federal Government announced the establishment of the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education as part of the Backing Australia’s Future initiative. The Carrick Institute will focus on improving Learning and Teaching in universities and it will distribute funding in the range of $26 million per year between 2006 and 2008. In preparation for the introduction of funding programs in 2006, four one-hour seminars were run by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic), professor Jan Thomas, in the week of 24th to 28th of October 2005 to help raise awareness among the staff.

• Professor Michael Christie, City of Mandurah Chair in Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation based at the Peel Campus, was the guest speaker at a “Business After 5 Soiree” presented by the Mandurah Peel Region Chamber of Commerce on 25th October 2005. He spoke on developing collaborative partnerships between business and education.

• His Honor, Justice Michael Kirby, Justice of the High Court of Australia gave the address at a lecture hosted by the Murdoch Law School on the 26th October 2005. In his speech Justice Kirby discussed the use of International Human Rights Law in Constitutional Adjudication.

• On the 27th October 2005 Mr Rodney Croome, spokesperson for the Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group presented on the topic ‘Coming Out In Education’. This was organised by the Office of Student Equity as part of the University’s celebration of PRIDE week. The aim of the presentation was to increase awareness and understanding on further issues of diversity.

• Professor Anne McMurray, Peel Health Campus Chair in Nursing, presented the annual Women in Engineering Lecture hosted by Murdoch Engineering in conjunction with Engineers Australia. Her lecture, titled Leadership for Change, addressed some of the lessons to be learned from leadership and capacity building programs in developing countries in terms of their applicability to women in Australia.

• Professor Spenser Havlick from the University of Colorado Boulder presented at a lecture hosted by the Institute for Sustainability and Technology Policy on the 3rd November 2005. The focus was on sustainability and local governance where Professor Havlick drew on his experiences in Boulder Colorado where they have developed a reputation as the preferred place to live through innovations covering transport, open space, water management, affordable housing, economic initiatives and community engagement. The aim was to help understand what this could mean for sustainability and local governance in Perth.

• On the 7th and 8th November I attended a number of meetings in Sydney, including:
  o The IDP Extraordinary General Meeting;
  o The Australian Higher Education Industrial Association (AHEIA) Annual General Meeting;
  o Unisuper annual general meeting
  o The Innovative Research Universities Australia (IRUA) Meeting; and
  o The Australian Vice Chancellors Committee (AVCC) Meeting.

• On the 9th November, Dr Michael Zastrocky, Vice President and Research Director in Gartner Research gave a presentation and discussion focussing on education in the 21st
Century and the changing ways of teaching such as e-learning and distance learning, teaching methods and the use of information technology and tools to facilitate the learning process. This presentation was attended by members of the Senior Executive and the IT Review Committee.

- Professor Jan Thomas, Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic) was the patron of the Relaxation & Rendezvous Expo held on the 9th November 2005 at Club Murdoch. This was one of the initiatives in the celebration of Murdoch University’s 30th year and was a showcase of what the University community does in its spare time. There were collections of specialist objects, crafts, wall hangings, artworks, sculptures, paintings, crocheting, ceramics and photography.

- The outgoing Governor, His Excellency, Lieutenant General John M Sanderson AC has accepted a position as an Adjunct Professor of Social Sciences and Humanities in the Division of Arts. He has expressed the desire to be able to both lecture and contribute written work for the consideration of staff and students.

- The Australian Consortium for ‘In-Country’ Indonesian Studies (ACICIS) has recently been granted a further $40,000 from the Myer Foundation for infrastructural support. This follows a grant of $50,000 received in 2004. Furthermore, DEST have agreed to provide funding of $75,000 per annum for the next two years to assist ACICIS and will work with them to develop strategies for its ongoing viability. ACICIS was established by Murdoch University in 1994 and places Australian students into Indonesian universities for semester long studies credited towards their Australian degrees. Eighteen Australian universities are now members of this consortium. The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) of the University of London, which is one of the oldest and most prestigious Schools internationally in the field of Asian Studies, has recently indicated that it will be joining ACICIS in 2006 as the consortium’s first international member university. Fifty one students from universities around Australia are enrolled for first semester 2005, this is the largest enrolment for six years and the fourth largest since ACICIS sent it first cohort in 1995.

**UPDATE ON SENATE RESOLUTION S/23/2005**

At its meeting on 24th May 2005, Senate resolved to adopt four priorities for 2005. A report on each is provided below:

(i) Maximising the University’s return on its assets, e.g. land, intellectual property by establishing an appropriate endowment/investment policy (Responsibility: Resources Committee and PVC (Resource Management)).

Further to the matters identified in the previous update, which are all continuing, the Pro Vice Chancellor (Corporate) is currently formulating a draft investment policy for consideration by Resources Committee. Subject to this outcome the Pro Vice Chancellor (Corporate) envisages putting the management and investment of surplus cash resources to tender in the New Year to improve returns on cash balances.

(ii) Engagement with external parties and the community, i.e. the extent to which members of Senate can support and promote the University through their external contacts and networks (Responsibility: Director of Development and Director Corporate & Public Relations).

The initiatives identified in the last update to Senate are all still continuing. For example the Leadership Matters series has continued to be successful. Senators have also been providing various items of interest to the Office of Corporate Communication and Public Relations (CCPR) for inclusion and/or consideration in the development of University publications.
The Office of Development and Alumni, CCPR and Mr Don Smart have continued their work on the establishment of the ‘Banksia Association’. The Banksia Association was initiated as part of the strategy to remain connected to people who have had a link with the University. The membership categories include past lay members of Senate, Emeritus Professors and Emeritus Associate Professors and those to whom the University has awarded an Honorary Degree. The formal launch of the Association is being held on Wednesday 30th November and following this event a small group of members will be involved in planning a schedule of annual activities and events to ensure that members’ loyalty to Murdoch and involvement in Murdoch plans and programs is maximised.

(iii) Identification of long-term goals for the University, including understanding the changing nature of higher education policy (Responsibility: PVC (Resource Management) and PVC (Strategy)).

Management has undertaken a 10 year operating surplus/deficit and cash forecast that recognises the changing nature of Higher Education policies and the implications on the University financial performance. Management have used this forecast to understand the quantum of the issues the changes to Higher Education policy creates and are now rolling out presentations across the university community to share this background information to prepare the university for a new strategic plan development in the New Year.

Management is also looking at reformulating the strategic priorities of the University given the changing operating environment. A process is being developed for revision of the strategic plan.

(iv) Maintain the University’s compliance with the National Governance Protocols (Responsibility: Governance & Nominations Committee and General Counsel & University Secretary).

FOR NOTING

Registration as a Provider of Courses to Full Fee Overseas Students – National Code Audit

The Department of Education recently visited the University to undertake a compliance audit in accordance with the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students. Murdoch University has received advice that we are maintaining a high level of compliance in most areas. We received a commendation on the quality of the promotional and information material provided to international students, the support services available, recruitment and marketing, facilities and resources of the Murdoch campus and the knowledge and expertise of all staff dealing with international students. I would like to echo the thanks expressed by the Department to the staff involved in the audit process, in particular Mr Brett Blacker, Director Murdoch International, and Ms Tara Felton, Assistant Director, International Student Support, who coordinated the visit.

Recommendation

Murdoch University Veterinary Trust

That Senate appoint Mr Brian Aitken, Professor John Howell, Dr Clyde McGill and Professor Nick Costa as Trustees of the Murdoch University Veterinary Trust for a 3 year term commencing 1 January 2006.