

# RESEARCH COMMITTEE COMMUNIQUE #2

News and updates from UON's Research Committee Meeting



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NEWCASTLE  
AUSTRALIA

## 2 April 2019 Meeting

Welcome to the second edition of the Research Committee Communique covering all of the highlights from the 2nd April 2019 Research Committee meeting.

### NIER Annual Highlights

The Director, Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources (NIER), spoke to the NIER Highlight presentation, advising the Committee of the launch of UON's first Global Impact Cluster for Energy, Resources, Food and Water (GIC ERFW). The GIC ERFW was launched in 2017 and implemented in 2018, and facilitates initiatives such as the Pacific Node, the Doctoral Training Centre for Advanced Mining Equipment, Technology and Services (METS) and the Central Coast Food Innovation Region Initiatives.

The Pacific Node initiative focuses on finding solutions to challenges faced by Pacific Island communities.

The Committee were informed of the launch of the Advanced METS Doctoral Training Centre. The Centre utilises PhD students to work on research projects developed in collaboration with industry. It aims to advance industry skills, involves students working with industry based supervisors as mentors and delivers training around transformational technologies.

The Committee were informed of the opening of the Food and Agribusiness initiative, which represents a vital sector to the national economy.

An overview of the Innovation Launchpad and the Energy and Resource knowledge hub was provided. This initiative provides a network of knowledge, helps to refine solutions, provides focused funding, involves mature start-ups, houses research teams from the clients and provides equipment and other resources for Subject Matter Experts.

An overview of the UON Upper Hunter Tertiary Education Centre in Muswellbrook was provided, noting staff from the Family Action Centre are located there, providing an additional portal for UON to engage with the region.

### Infrastructure and Estate Update

The Deputy Director, Campus Development and the NeW Futures Capital Projects Director, spoke to the presentation. The Deputy Director Campus Development gave an overview of the Callaghan campus masterplan, including a consolidation of infrastructure onto the western side of the campus with a focus on vibrancy and interdisciplinary research. Stakeholder engagement is underway to look at other uses for the campus into the future.

Key projects planned for the next five years include:

- the STEMM building which will be located at the front door to the Callaghan campus after the demolition of the McMullin Building;
- the Bioresources Facility, to be the first of the New Futures Projects, planned to be in operation in 2021;
- construction on the Glasshouse building, to be located in the NIER precinct is in progress. This facility will focus on food science investment to support the Global Impact Cluster for Energy, Resources, Food and Water; and
- the Chemistry upgrade, focusing on laboratory upgrades to support future interdisciplinary research.

An overview of the investment of land in Honeysuckle and the Masterplan was discussed. Members were advised that the Creative Industries Facility, the Innovation Hub buildings and a Student Accommodation building which will accommodate 300 beds have been approved.

The members were given an overview of the Central Coast Plan, noting that the Vice-Chancellor has the desire to have stronger presence in Gosford, with plans for construction of the Central Coast Medical School and Research Institute. Other work being undertaken at the Central Coast include the Gosford Hospital design and fit-out and the Ourimbah laboratory and teaching space upgrades.



## Research IT Update

The Associate Director, Channel Services, spoke to the IT Update presentation. An overview of the IT Strategic Plan was discussed and members were informed that supporting researchers and students was the focus of the strategy's development.

An update was provided on the myUON (The App), noting it is available as an application which can be used for downloads on both desktops and mobile devices. The App has been built to respond to needs identified by researchers, with features including the ability to view the status of grants and checking HDR student progress. Members were encouraged to look at the website and submit ideas of what they would find useful on The App, noting that it also provides benefits for professional staff.

An overview of the Service Management Solution was provided, noting this originally started as an IT Service, but is now being used by Strategy, Planning and Performance, Legal Office, Finance and the R&I Division Research Performance Team.

Members were advised that the Research Toolkit is in discovery phase. The Toolkit is a data and management system that includes enhancements to the Research Information Management System (RIMS), the HDR scholarship systems and systems to facilitate bookings for shared research equipment.

Concerns were raised about the McMullin Building demolition, with the data centre being the primary focus. Members were informed that a multi cloud provider is being considered to replace the data centre and UON IT staff and Deloitte are working together to find the best solution. A series of forums around the cloud migration will be held and members were encouraged to raise any concerns. It was noted that the steering committee must consider the needs of and implications for researchers. The issue of software applications not being available in the cloud was raised and members questioned if IT Services have looked at all software applications used throughout faculties. Members were informed that UON are currently looking at Amazon and Microsoft as potential cloud providers. Members were informed that IT Services have employed a staff member to investigate cloud licencing, this staff member will check every licence and contract. The issue of licencing costs associated with the cloud was raised, noting that the licence costs can be expensive and may need to be incorporated into research grants.

The Committee discussed the migration process, noting that staff may not know if data has been corrupted as some research data may not be used for several years.

## Report of the Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation

The Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation, gave a verbal report acknowledging and thanking all staff involved in contributing and bringing to fruition the Excellence in Research Australia (ERA) assessment and the Engagement Impact (EI) assessment results. Members were informed that UON has received fantastic outcomes, the data is comprehensive noting a lift in UON performance across the board and the results show UON are ahead of its main competitors. Outstanding Results were highlighted for Engineering, Biological Sciences, Psychology and Cognitive Sciences and Medical and Health Sciences.

It was noted that all of the Pro Vice-Chancellors have been sent the ERA data and are encouraged to interrogate the results for their Faculties and consider what other sectors are doing.

The Committee were informed of the positive EI assessment results, with most of the results sitting in the medium to high impact range. The assessment covers three measures of Engagement, Impact and Approach to Impact. Impressive results were highlighted for Engineering and Education and Arts with Education and Arts ranking in the top 10. It was noted that Chemical Sciences, Medicine and Health Sciences also performed well. The Committee was advised that UON results are on target when compared to the sector for all categories and there are areas where UON has performed better than the sector.

Members were informed that the Director, Research and Innovation will attend faculty meetings to start to engage on what faculties are investing in, and to consult on the 2021 ERA and EI assessment developments.

The Committee was advised that 2018 was a strong year for HDR completions with 269 HDR completions, the highest completion rate on record and an increase of 7% on the previous year.

An update on the Research Australia conference was provided noting that there will be limited additional funds through the National Health and Medicine Research Council (NHMRC), with work being undertaken to focus on the change in funding models and increased emphasis on funding through the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF). Work is being undertaken in relation to the Translational Research funds and National Science projects.

## Research Strategy Group Report

The Acting Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation, spoke to this report noting the NSW Defence Innovation and Cyber Security Networks provide potential to generate income across all Faculties, they are undertaking capabilities mapping and will develop a strategy.

Members were advised that the Research Advantage NEWstars and Research Leaders schemes will be launched in 2019.

The new Research Breach Procedure was discussed, noting the procedure was available online through the policy library and provides a clear process for dealing with allegations of research breach.

There was discussion around defence noting that UON needs to look broadly at the opportunities surrounding defence as UON has a regional advantage and work had been undertaken to build connections. Suggestions of opportunities to contribute to defence were discussed, including consideration of resilience training in health, social work, veteran support, social justice and the impacts of the number of military personal on stress leave or disability discharge.

## Report of the Director, Research and Innovation

The Director, Research and Innovation, spoke to this item informing members that the impressive ERA and EI results will be reported and a presentation will be provided to the Research Strategy Group. The BI Dashboards will be made available and staff are encouraged to look at the impact case studies. Materials to facilitate submission for the next ERA and EI rounds will be made available to utilise the interest that the results have generated from the 2018 results.

## Contact

For more information contact Council and Academic Senate Services, phone: 4921 6983 or email: [academicsenate@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:academicsenate@newcastle.edu.au)

## Next Research Committee Meeting

18 June 2019.

