

RMIT BUSINESS ARC SUCCESS



Left to right: Dr. Lisa Farrell (Uni. of Melb), Prof. Tim Fry (RMIT) and Assoc. Prof. Sinclair Davidson (RMIT)

In the recent ARC funding announcements RMIT Business was successful in obtaining one ARC Discovery Grant, one ARC Linkage Grant and was also successful on another ARC Linkage being administered by the University of Melbourne. In addition, Dr. Elspeth McKay from the School of BIT is on an ARC Discovery reserve list for her grant application to investigate the ontological complexity of web-mediated collaborative learning networks.

Congratulations are extended to all the successful ARC grant applicants from RMIT Business: Assoc. Prof. Sinclair Davidson, Prof. Tim Fry, Prof. Rob Brooks, Dr. Roslyn Russell and Assoc. Prof. Michael McKenzie.

Details of the successful grants are provided overpage:

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ARC Discovery:

DP0449846 Assoc. Prof Sinclair Davidson, Prof Tim Fry , Dr L Farrell

Title: Economic Reform and Australian Electoral Decision Making

2004 : \$50,000

2005 : \$50,000

2006 : \$50,000

Category: 3404 - ECONOMETRICS

Administering Institution: RMIT University

Summary:

Australia has undergone dramatic economic, demographic and social change in the past twenty years. This project will investigate how these changes have impacted upon elector behaviour. With compulsory voting, comprehensive census data and the Australian Election Study an uniquely detailed dataset can be constructed. This dataset and the application of cutting edge statistical techniques from the fields of cohort analysis and discrete choice modelling will allow for the untangling of various influences on voter behaviour. With compulsory voting many biases due to voter turnout issues will be avoided making this project an unbiased test, with international interest and significance, of voter behaviour.

ARC Linkage:

LP0453477 Dr. Roslyn Russell, Prof Robert Brooks, Ms J Morton

Title: Demand and Supply of Creative Arts in Rural and Regional Areas

2004 : \$23,556

2005 : \$23,556

2006 : \$23,556

Category: 3402 - APPLIED ECONOMICS

APA(I) Award(s): 1

Partner Organisation(s)

Arts Victoria

Administering Institution: RMIT University

Summary:

The arts industry has experienced substantial growth over the last thirty years, providing significant economic and social benefits nationally. While growth in this sector is represented on both the demand and supply sides, it has not been evenly distributed geographically. There is significant difference between the health of the arts industry in the city centres and that of rural and regional areas. This project will investigate entrepreneurial capacity of the arts in regional Victoria and develop best practice business models that promote sustainability in small to medium sized arts enterprises which will in turn aid in the regeneration of regional areas.

DP0451719 Dr. OT Henry, Assoc. Prof MD McKenzie

Title: Causes and Consequences of Short Selling for Equity Returns

2004 : \$60,000

2005 : \$60,000

2006 : \$60,000

Category: 3503 - BANKING, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

Administering Institution: The University of Melbourne

Summary:

Short selling involves holding negative quantities of an asset. As prices fall, the short position makes profit. Short selling is thought to reflect the market's expectation of future underperformance. This study aims to explore the determinants and consequences of short selling. In particular we aim to address the following:

1. Do short sales create excessive volatility?
2. Can we price the volatility associated with short selling in a modern risk management framework?
3. What factors underlie the volume of short sales?
4. Should we distinguish between long and short transactions, or is gross traded volume a sufficient measure of turnover?

Clusters and New Industry Policy



Featuring US-based International Economic Development Expert Professor Michael Luger

Professor Luger will report on several applications of cluster analysis in the United States, with which he has been involved, including a follow-up to Michael Porter's Clusters of Innovation work in North Carolina and the use of the technique in industrial park planning in peripheral areas. Professor Luger has been involved in the development of the cluster analysis methodology for over ten years, as well as its use in policy throughout the U.S., Europe, and Asia.

About Michael Luger: Professor Luger is Director of the Office of Economic Development at the University of North Carolina in the world-famous research triangle. He is Professor of Public Policy, Planning, and Business at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and member of the Kenan Institute. He has a longstanding prominence in addressing economic development issues, with special expertise in development incentives, public-private partnerships, and the role of clusters and research parks in regional rejuvenation. He led a project to develop the rural counties of the Research Triangle region and a review of the state's economic development delivery system for the North Carolina General Assembly.

Professor Luger has published and presented extensively on economic development issues including infrastructure, research and technology parks (including the book, "Technology in the Garden"), university impact, clusters, tax incentives, workforce dynamics and competitiveness in the new economy. His national report on technology infrastructure for distressed communities is available at www.oed.unc.edu

Date: Tuesday 28 October

Time: 4pm – 6pm refreshments will be provided on arrival

Location: Level 46, Threatrette 55 Collins Street, Melbourne Vic 3000

More info : www.lab.3000.com.au or call 03 9925 4810

Registration: To register please send an email to: lab.3000@rmit.edu.au with your name, position and organisation details by Friday October 24th.

CSIRO Postgraduate (Top-Up) Scholarship Program - Round 3 for 2004

Applications will close on 31st October

CSIRO is again offering up to 60 top-up scholarships for students who gain APA's or equivalent university postgraduate awards for PhD studies to start in 2004. There have been delays in finalising the scheme for this third round, due to CSIRO's current strategic planning activities, and there will be some changes in the emphasis for research topics.

The conditions of the scholarships themselves will be the same as for Round 2 - at least \$7000 p.a. top-up stipend, \$4000 p.a. operating support towards the project costs, and a single travel grant of \$6000 intended to support attendance at an overseas conference. Applicants must have first class honours (or equivalent as judged by the university) and be Australian citizens or permanent residents.

Half the scholarships will be for research programs aligned with the new CSIRO Flagship programs, which address National Research Priorities. The other half will emphasise the strategic objectives of CSIRO's divisions, including emerging science initiatives and new cross-divisional programs in ICT, Climate and Security.

We hope that this program will further support the goal of increased collaboration in research activities between universities and CSIRO.

The CSIRO Postgraduate Scholarship Program for 2004 will be advertised shortly, and applications will close on 31st October. Dr Peter Turner (peter.s.turner@csiro.au) will again coordinate the CPSP, and he will contact your graduate offices as soon as the advertisement is released.

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New Research Student Admin. Officer: Prue Lamont

The Research Development Unit welcomes Prue Lamont - the new Research Student Administration Officer.

Prue can assist with any matters related to Higher Degrees by Research, research student administration and ethics. Prue joins the RDU team this month and can be contacted on 992 55598 or email prue.lamont@rmit.edu.au.

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Australian Partnership for Advanced Computing National Facility

The APAC National Facility is now calling for proposals from all staff at Australian institutions of higher education for compute time on our supercomputer. **The application deadline is 12 November 2003**

The target audience includes researchers and postgraduate students in all fields of science, mathematics, social sciences, economics and any other disciplines which may use computational modeling in their research.

For further details contact:

APAC National Facility Tel: (02) 6125 3437 email: help@nf.apac.edu.au Web: www.apac.edu.au



Research Funding Opportunities

For details regarding other current research funding opportunities please visit the Research & Development Funding website which provides a list of grants, awards, scholarships and fellowships available to staff and students and is updated weekly at: **www.rmit.edu.au/rd/funding**

Also for a listing of scholarships available please visit the Joint Academic Scholarship On-line Network (JASON) website. JASON is an on-line database of scholarship information for postgraduate students. For further information please visit: **jason.unimelb.edu.au**

Cotton Research & Development Corp (CRDC) Research Projects

RMIT deadline Mon 19 January 2004 (external 27 Jan)

CRDC financially assists a program of research aimed at advancing Aust cotton industry. Applications are now open for Research Project Assistance. In making a selection CRDC considers the benefits to Aust cotton industry, & the nation, from the proposed research. Applicants are strongly advised to seek industry input before compiling submissions. Projects can be undertaken in any field of cotton research incl. but not limited to the following areas:

- People & Knowledge (e.g., Community & Economics, Extension & Human Resources)
- Integrated Natural Resource Management
- Crop Protection (e.g., Insect, Diseases & Weeds management)
- Farming Systems
- Breeding & Biotechnology
- Value Chain (e.g. Processing & Market)

Eligibility: Applicants will need to demonstrate the ability to undertake research in a rigorous fashion & to critically evaluate & fully report research findings, either individually or in collaboration with others.

Contact:

Tel: 02-6792 4088 email: research@crdc.com.au

URL: www.crdc.com.au/res_funding.html

Foundation for Urban & Regional Studies Ltd (FURS) Research Grants

RMIT deadline Fri 23 January 2004 (external 31 Jan)

FURS is anxious to encourage newly graduated researchers or junior colleagues of established researchers who have difficulty in getting funds to support research in urban & regional studies. It is particularly keen to encourage an understanding of the interconnection between social, economic & political processes & the broader causes & effects of these processes. Although these concerns are likely to lead to social scientists such as sociologists, political scientists, geographers, economists & town planners predominating among applicants, others such as lawyers, cultural theorists, anthropologists & historians should not be discouraged from applying. Trustees are particularly concerned to provide support for urban & regional researchers in Eastern Europe, Africa, Latin America & Asia. Grants may be held in any university.

Amount: £2,000 max.

Eligibility: Funding is only offered to students who are within field of urban & regional studies.

Contact: Tel: +44 (0)1206-873599 email: furs@essex.ac.uk

URL: www.essex.ac.uk/furs/funding/grants/index.php

ARC Expert Advisory Committees 2004 Call for Nominations

ARC is seeking people with a variety of expertise & experience, drawn from higher education, industry, business sectors & public sector research organisations to become members of its Expert Advisory Committees. Membership will commence in 2004 & will be for up to 3 years. Members will be expected to have a wide range of expertise relevant to the ARC's programs in one of the following areas:

- Biological Sciences & Biotechnology
- Engineering & Environmental Sciences
- Mathematics, Information & Communications
- Physics, Chemistry & Geoscience
- Social, Behavioural & Economic Sciences
- Humanities & Creative Arts

As well as playing a role in assessment of grant applications, EACs provide strategic advice to the ARC on emerging disciplinary & cross-disciplinary developments & innovative approaches to research. Nominees need to meet prescribed selection criteria & should be submitted through a nominating institution/organisation using the ARC's EAC nomination form, which includes the selection criteria.

Note: If you are considering nominating for an EAC Committee, please contact **Lorraine Bridger x52532** to discuss your nomination and the requirements involved. **The RMIT closing date is Friday 7 November 2003** (external 14 Nov).

Application forms are available online: <https://gams.arc.gov.au/eachome>

Contact: Ms Ananda Abeyaratne tel : (02) 6284 6626 email ananda.abeyaratne@arc.gov.au



Finding the Light at the End of the Tunnel: Completion Strategies for Research Degrees

by Pam Green (RMIT) and Jacqueline Rowarth (UNITEC New Zealand)

Beginning a higher degree is not unlike embarking upon a long journey where the light at the end of the tunnel often seems elusive. However, the time does somehow flee once you move along the tunnel a little, and keeping on task and keeping in view your goal of a timely (and successful) completion is vital. What completion strategies, as candidate, supervisor and/or institutional level, are available to us?

Program Management - The use of program management techniques can enhance completion. While there are computer programs like Project Kickstart, you can adapt the techniques to suit your own context and needs. Goal setting is the way to start followed by the explication of tasks. Break down your goals into doable, sizeable chunks of activity. Consider the nature of the tasks and whether or not certain tasks need prime focus and concentration. Plan those tasks that demand less than your full energy (such as getting references in order) for times when you are perhaps tired or less able to give 100%. Use the high energy times for the important work, such as reading and writing. Big picture timelines are needed for overall planning and scoping. Look at the whole timeframe in front of you and break it down into major goals for significant time planning. Detailed timelines - even down to a day by day level - can help focus your activity and provide a way to monitor progress towards completion. This kind of planning goes well beyond the normal type of grant chart planning that Higher Degree committees often want.

Shadowing - The term shadowing is used here to mean heavy duty tracking of progress. Supervisors and postgraduate co-ordinators have a prime role in shadowing students in order to track development along the research journeys. However, you do need to track your own progress as well. Such tracking can occur in various ways such as through weekly updates on email, regular face to face meetings with supervisors, progress review meetings, postgraduate conference presentations, conference presentations and seminar presentations.

Forms of Financial Support - Apart from stipend scholarships and the short term completion scholarships that only few students gain, there are often other forms of financial support available to you. RMIT Business administers the Portfolio's Research Student Support Fund. This offers fiscal support for research students to help with expenses incurred as part of their research and progress towards completion of their research degree. It can provide up to 50% of funding towards costs associated with data collection, conference attendance where a student has had a paper accepted especially when a publication will be forthcoming.

A Space in Which to Work - At RMIT Business we have a minimal resource policy for students which is worth checking out if you are not familiar with what you are entitled to as a student. At RMIT all of our full time students have an office space or postgraduate computer lab in which to work. If this is not possible, find a place that suits you. Or if you do work at home establish some rules to make it work. For instance, no domestic work during PhD time. Plan your breaks. Do not allow yourself to be distracted by mundane tasks such as cleaning out cupboards. One student we know embarked on major renovation during her PhD. She completed on time but established rules around when this work was appropriate and kept her thesis the major focus. Letting others (family and friends) gently but firmly know that you have set times for working where you need to be left in peace (free from calls and/or visits) can really help. If you are sharing an office or a lab working out some kind of agreement about silent working times is imperative. Good ideas come and go but quickly and most of us cannot afford to be interrupted unnecessarily at such moments.

Routines: Predictability - Finding a routine that suits you can help. One routine for a very focused full time PhD student went something like this (during the writing up phase):

8am: Proof read draft from the day prior. Annotate in detail. (Note that drinking coffee can work wonders at this point of the day.)

- 10am: Read relevant materials (notes of reading- kept on Endnote) to continue writing. Write.
- 1pm: Short walk and lunch (often with another student)
- 1.30pm: Visit library for further resources if needed. Plan writing.
- 3.00 onwards: (Depending on how the writing is proceeding) Writing.

Before signing off at the end of the day (at whatever time that might be ... if possible keep writing when you are on a roll ...)

- Document in detail what needs to be done on the following day.
- Record issues in the research diary.
- In particular, note any questions.
- Do a word count for the day.
- Check out the work plan.
- Print a copy.

Some times varying where you work helps. For instance, proof reading can be done anywhere if you have a paper copy. So this activity can be one done out of the office to give yourself a change of scene. Some students proof read well in coffee shops where they feel less isolated, and have the comfort of a hot coffee but can still block out the noise to concentrate. In the end the ways of working are up to you. Being honest with yourself about how effective these ways of working are - in the end only you can really judge this.

This brings us to the issue of celebrating milestones.

Celebrate - When you reach a much sought after milestone- do take some time to celebrate. When you finish your proposal and gain ethics clearance, you have reached an early but significant goal. When you publish your first paper or give a conference paper - enjoy your success. But not for too long (okay we know that we are basically conservative) ... When you finish a chapter - take a day off and do something that you like but do plan to resume the day after. Don't lose momentum.

A Supportive Net - When you are studying within an institution, whether you are part time or full time, you have access to networks that are worth pursuing. Use the opportunities to meet others when you can - do go to the staff room, the postgraduate room, the seminar series, the late night lectures, and the structured programs (induction, targeted workshops, library sessions, research methods and so on). Develop a supportive net of colleagues and resources around you - such a research environment will motivate, support and help you to complete well and on time.

The light at the end of the tunnel will be more than in view ...



Research Development Unit

Level 13, Building 108

Telephone: 9925 5594

Fascimile: 9925 5595

Email: rdu@rmit.edu.au

Website: www.rmit.edu.au/bus/rdu

Staff at the RDU

Assoc. Prof. Pam Green, Associate Dean (Research)

Bronwyn Coate, Lecturer Research Methods

Liz Merlot, Research Officer

Kalpana Lalji, Administrative Manager

Laszlo Romer, Administration Assistant

James Hill, Administration Assistant

Prue Lamont, Research Student Admin. Officer

The aim of this newsletter is to keep staff informed of research activity within RMIT Business and of research opportunities both outside and within the faculty. If you have any contributions (we are always interested in research or researchers for our feature article) that you think would be of interest to the faculty please contact Laszlo Romer at the RDU.

The *Business Research News* is also available for viewing on the RDU's web site shortly after it has been distributed in paper form. The web site also contains information for research staff and students including the RDU's library holdings.