Kenneth Waller, Director, The Australian APEC Study Centre (AASC), RMIT University

How would you describe the APEC Centre?

The Centre is one of a small number of international centres at RMIT. It was established originally at Monash University in the mid-1990s, and relocated to RMIT’s College of Business in 2009. The Centre — and others like it in the APEC region — was created in response to a proposal by APEC leaders to promote the organisation’s objectives in educational and public and private sectors through the Asia Pacific region. The key objectives of APEC are to promote open trade and investment, enhance capacities in public agencies, and develop measures that will lead to regional economic integration.

The scope of work undertaken by APEC has expanded to embrace all major economic and social challenges confronting the region. They include energy, the environment, education, connectivity, finance, emergency assistance, poverty alleviation, health, urbanisation and infrastructure planning and development. We organise training programs for policy and regulatory agency officials to help build institutional capacities, and we also convene forums and symposia to promote thinking and best practices on these various issues. The Centre also develops programs with the involvement of specialists from the private and public sectors, academia, and from regional and international organisations.

We organise programs in the Asia Pacific region as well as in Melbourne. Our program funding comes from successfully bidding for projects under AusAID’s various facilities, from the APEC and ASEAN Secretariats, and DFAT and the Commonwealth Treasury. The Victorian government also supports our work. The Centre has cooperative agreements with a number of institutions in the Asian region, and our chairman since its inception is Alan Oxley of ITS Global. In addition, the Centre has a high-level strategic advisory board and an advisory group on financial sector matters. We have a staff of seven, including three part-time members.
What are the goals and objectives of the Centre?

Its goals and objectives are designed to meet the challenges posed by rapid economic and social change in the Asian region. One of our specific objectives is to engage with and promote RMIT and the College of Business in all the work that we do. We intend to be the leading APEC Study Centre in the region, recognised for the quality of work we do. Part of our brief is to ensure that the Centre’s relationship with RMIT is fully recognised throughout the Asia Pacific region.

What are the current research projects underway in the Centre?

Our primary role is promoting good public policy. The research work we do supports this policy role. We currently have research commissioned on investment indicators and their relevance in investment decision-making.

In addition, we commission research on a continuing basis to support the STAR database, a tool that the Centre manages on behalf of DFAT. The STAR database promotes a better understanding of investment and regulatory policies in APEC economies in trade and services.

Source: Director, Kenneth Waller

Call for Abstracts: Three Minute Competition for Academics and Academic Development Group staff

The College of Business’ Research Office is hosting the ‘Three Minute Presentation’ competition at the Business Research Showcase, 2013.

With this year’s theme being ‘Think, Write, Tweet: Communicating Your Research’, there’s no better way to reflect this than presenting your own research at the Competition!

Abstracts are invited from academic and academic development group staff who wish to present a current research project. Abstracts of about 150 words should be submitted through the online registration form by Monday, 26 August.

Shortlisted candidates will present their research topic from one slide (no sound animation or videos) in only three minutes.

Abstract submission date: Monday, 26 August
Competition date: Tuesday, 8 October
Time: 11.00 am – 12.30pm
Venue: B13.03.007

Source: Business Research Office

Latest from CBER (Centre for Business Education Research)

The Centre for Business Education Research organised three major activities in June and July, attracting interest from academics and practitioners.

Living with complexity: In a seminar held in June, Dave Snowden presented an overview of his research and practice. Dave is the founder and Chief Scientific Officer of Cognitive Edge, a research network that focuses on the development of the theory and practice of sense-making. Dave spoke about how organisations should focus on people, collaboration, distributed cognition, and pervasive social computing in order to deal with complexity. He spoke how organisations and businesses need to adopt agile methods. Dave introduced participants to Sensemaker®, a software package that enables people to tell and self-interpret stories.

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Latest from CBER (cont.)

During his visit to Australia, Dave also discussed with the Victorian Health Commission how Sensemaker® can be used to overlay human metadata on medical data. Using this software could create a whole new approach to understanding the patient’s journey.

New Generation Learning Spaces (NGLS): This one-day symposium was organised jointly by CBER and the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) - Victoria on 18 July. The event included a debate, a presentation on an Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT)-funded project, and 18 PechaKucha presentations.

The presentations addressed the theme of the opening debate: “Build it, but will they learn?” Discussions included discourse around the importance of design informed by future users, and student engagement in interactive learning spaces.

The Inaugural CBER PechaKucha Awards were shared between Dr Katherine Baverstock (School of Medical Sciences, RMIT) and Laurie Aznavoorian & Tanya Hillman (industry practitioners from Geyer). Abstracts can be read at: http://www.rmit.edu.au/events/ngls.

In the final research workshop, academics and industry practitioners agreed to establish an online networking space to explore future research possibilities.

The symposium concluded with the book launch for ePedagogy in Online learning: New Developments in web mediated human capital Interaction (edited by Associate Professor Elspeth McKay [School of Business IT and Logistics]).

Professor Sandra Jones, CBER’s Director, described the symposium as a ‘creative approach to engaging academics and industry representatives who are focused on research in business education’.

Innovative Practice Trial: Students from RMIT participated in the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) funded project, ‘Innovative Practice Trial (IPT)’. They presented their reports to the industry partner, the Riddles Creek Land Care Group (RCLCG).

It included a strategy that addressed the complex problems faced by the RCLCG. The organisation commented that they have had to rethink their activities and basic beliefs, with “the questions that students asked...is having a real impact on the RCLCG”.

Source: Professor Sandra Jones
Identifying opportunities in the Latrobe Valley region: Final Report

A newly released report into the Latrobe Valley’s economic future examines opportunities for investment and job growth in the Latrobe Valley.

In January 2012, the Commonwealth Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport (DRALGAS) commissioned the Centre for Sustainable Organisations and Work (CSOW) to examine opportunities for investment and job growth in the Latrobe Valley. This report outlines the key findings, priorities and considerations of this study.

To read the full report, please visit: RMIT’s Business Research page.

Source: Professor Peter Fairbrother

Practice based approach to Doctoral Education

RMIT’s Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program provided the springboard for a review and discussion paper recently published in the Academy of Management Learning and Education, an A* journal.

In this paper, Professors Clive Morley and Bobby Banerjee (the first two Directors of the RMIT DBA) discuss the emergence of professional doctorates in management education and their contribution to a more practice-based approach to doctoral education.

Professional doctorates were developed by some universities in the face of rising criticism about the relevance of PhD research to practice, and the changing context and content of knowledge in the new economy. They conclude by discussing implications for doctoral education and directions for future research.

Publication details can be found under ‘Recent Publications’.

Source: Associate Professor Siva Muthaly

Professor Prem Chhetri appointed in the Expert Panel for MOWE-IT

Professor Prem Chhetri (School of Business IT and Logistics) was recently appointed to an International Expert Panel on an EU project called MOWE-IT (Management of Weather Events in the Transport Systems). The project is funded through the European Union Seventh Framework Program. It is a multi-million Euro (2.3 million) project based in Germany.

The goal of the MOWE-IT project is to identify existing best practices and develop methodologies to lower the impact of natural disasters and extreme weather phenomena on transport system performance.

The International Expert Panel will provide opportunities for fast exchange of information and sharing of research results between the panel and the MOWE-IT consortium.

As a panelist, Prem will provide strategic direction to the project. Prem will assist the MOWE-IT consortium in organising workshops dedicated to road and rail transport, and training sessions in Brussels. More details on the project can be found at: http://www.mowe-it.eu/.

Source: Professor Prem Chhetri

RMIT HDRs and Academics at AFAANZ

On Wednesday, 10 July, academics and HDR students from the School of Accounting attended and presented papers at the Accounting and Finance Association of Australia and New Zealand (AFAANZ) conference.

AFAANZ is the premier body representing the interests of accounting and finance academics and other persons interested in accounting and finance education and research in Australia and New Zealand. The Association hosts this annual event in early July of each year at different locations throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Details of the conference, including copies of papers presented, can be found at http://wwwafaanz.org/conferences

Source: Marita Shelly
Best Student Paper in Critical Management Studies (CMS)

PhD candidate Farheen Alamgir’s (School of Management) paper has been declared the Best CMS Student Paper at the Academy of Management meeting. Her paper is titled ‘Conflicting Regimes, Legitimacy of the State: Exploring Rights-Centric Management’. In this paper, Fahreen outlined her research on the implications of, and responses to, globalism in the postcolonial state of Bangladesh. Fahreen will be presenting this paper at the 73rd Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, 9-13 August, 2013, Orlando, USA.

Source: Fahreen Alamgir

Recipient of the Ian Permezel Memorial Award

Dr Margaret Heffernan, OAM (School of Management) is the recipient of the Ian Permezel Memorial Award 2013. This $5,000 prize is awarded to an Early Career Researcher (ECR) to present a refereed paper at an overseas conference.

Margaret will present a co-authored paper on Health Promotion Lessons at the 21st International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) World Conference, 25-29 August, 2013 in Thailand.

Source: Dr Margaret Heffernan

Australia-China Council Grant

A research team led by Dr Charlie Huang (School of Management) has received $29,896 in funding for their project ‘Community engagement by Chinese firms in Australia: practices and benefits’. Other members of the team are School of Management colleagues, Drs Warren Staples and Nattavud Pimpa.

This project investigates how Chinese companies have developed their community engagement practices, what benefits have accrued for Australia, and how these practices can be enhanced in the future.

Source: Dr Charlie Huang

Recipient of Connecting Business and Design Grant

Dr Heather Douglas (School of Management) and her research team have received an Inaugural Business and Design internal grant. The project, titled ‘Design Mind: Design Thinking for Social Enterprise Communication’, examines the role and effects of design in the development of communication strategies for social enterprises. The research team includes Dr Heather Douglas (School of Management), Dr Judith Rogers (Architecture and Design), Anna Lorenzetto (HDR, College of Design), Josh Fartsch Annecto) and Mark Daniels (Social Traders).

Source: Dr Heather Douglas
Competitive Grants by Australian Centre for Financial Studies

Several academics from the School of Economics, Finance, and Marketing have won competitive grants from the Australian Centre for Financial Studies (ACFS) with the following projects:

The WikiLeaks Effect
Research Team: Professor Imad Moosa and Associate Professor Vikash Ramiah
Aim: The project investigates the effects of leakages on equity markets and how WikiLeaks can be used to source the leaks.

Dividend policy, corporate ownership, earnings growth and market returns: an Australian Study.
Research Team: Professor Michael Dempsey and Dr Thanh Tan Truong

Who Started the Fire: Has Residential Mortgage Innovation Fuelled a Housing Affordability Crisis?
Research Team: Dr Ashton De Silva, Dr Stuart Thomas, Dr Jonathan Boymal and Associate Professor Jason Potts
Aim: This project will develop a chronology of mortgage market innovations for the period (1990-2010) which will be used together with twenty years of housing price and household income data (1990-2010) to test whether there is empirical evidence that mortgage market innovation has increased housing inaffordability.

Source: Dr Ashton De Silva

Recent Publications


Seed Grants from the School of Management

Two seed grants from the School of Management were granted to:

1. Dr Warren Staples & Associate Professor Rosalie Holian on ‘Enhancing Ethical and Sustainable Decision Making in Organisations’.

2. Professor Adela McMurray & Dr Charlie Huang on ‘Exploring the link between workplace and technological innovations and their impact of innovation performance in Australian manufacturing firms’. Their research aims to gain a better understanding and explore the relationships between the technological innovation and the workplace innovation.


Upcoming Research Events

Three Minute Thesis Semi-final, College of Business

The 3 Minute Thesis competition is a great opportunity for Higher Degree by Research Candidates to develop their communication and presentation skills, and win a prize!

Candidates are asked to present a compelling oration on their thesis topic to an intelligent but non-specialist audience in three minutes using a single PowerPoint slide.

The College of Business 3MT Semi-final will be held as follows:

Date: Thursday, 15 August
Location: B13.03.007
Time: 10.00am-12.00pm

Source: Prue Lamont

Skills Challenges in the Transport and Logistics Sector

Robert Adams, CEO of Transport and Logistics Industry Skills Council (TLISC), will lead this seminar. This seminar is part of the Centre for Sustainable Organisations and Work Seminar Series.

Date: Wednesday, 28 August
Time: 1.00-2.30pm
Venue: B80.11.006
RSVP: Monday, 26 August at hae-sun.cho@rmit.edu.au

Source: Hae-Sun Cho

How do Business Analytics Systems bring Value to Organisations

The School of Business IT and Logistics has invited Professor Graeme Shanks from Melbourne University. Graeme will discuss the development and empirical evaluation of several theoretical models within the research program, and some insights that have emerged.

Date: Tuesday, 20 August
Time: 10.30-11.30am
Venue: B80.10.019

Source: Professor Nilmini Wickramasinghe

For updates on research events and other research activities (College of Business), visit: Business Research Intranet
Business Research Office (BRO)

Professor Geoffrey Stokes
Deputy PVC Business (Research)

Dessie Panayi
Personal Assistant to Professor Geoffrey Stokes

Tania Tambiah
Senior Manager, Research Development

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Senior Advisor, Research Grant Development

Danielle Annese
Research Coordinator

Kalpana Lalji
Resource Coordinator

Kristina Tsoulis-Reay
Ethics Coordinator

Prue Lamont
Administrative Officer – Research

Aastha Swaroop
Administrative Officer – Research

Marita Shelly
Research Coordinator
(Accounting & Graduate School of Business & Law)

Esther Ng
Administrative Officer — Research
(Economics, Finance & Marketing)

Priyanka Erasmus
Administrative Officer—Research
(Business IT & Logistics)

Sherrin Trautmann
Administrative Officer -Research
(Management)