Meeting No. 3/2004: Monday 12 July 2004

1. **ELECTION OF CHANCELLOR**

Professor Dennis Gibson was declared as elected Chancellor from 1 January 2005 for a four year period.

2. **NTEU RESOLUTIONS**

Council received and discussed resolutions for the NTEU on issues relating to the major change project and AMS.

3. **VICE-CHANCELLOR’S REPORT**

Council received the following report from the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ruth Dunkin.

“1. **Policy Issues**

1.1. **Higher Education**

1.1.1 RMIT is implementing all aspects of the Higher Education Support Act (which governs Commonwealth funding and regulatory arrangements) in a timely and comprehensive fashion. A working group structure has been implemented to ensure that academic and business processes and system requirements are aligned. The AMS ‘Traffic Light’ template has been adopted to chart progress against each of the major projects, and working groups report to VCE via a Steering Group that meets fortnightly (details can be found at [http://www2.rmit.edu.au/departments/planning/planning.php](http://www2.rmit.edu.au/departments/planning/planning.php)). A Risk Management Strategy for HESA implementation is being developed.

1.1.2 The main area of risk remains timely implementation of the Higher Education Information Management System, largely because of Commonwealth Government imposed timelines and changing data specifications. The HEIMS Working Group is working through these issues with the Commonwealth, other higher education providers and PeopleSoft to ensure that RMIT is compliant.

1.2. **Vocational Education & Training**

1.2.1 **Re-registration of RMIT University (TAFE Division)** – The registration of RMIT University (TAFE Division) under section 23 of the Victorian Qualifications Authority Act 2000 has been renewed for a period of 5 years, valid until 30 June 2009.
1.2.2 **RMIT 2003 annual statistical return from Office of Training & Tertiary Education**

– The results of the annual statistical return shows that RMIT has achieved its overall delivery target. However, within this target we have not delivered the specified minimum level of student contact hours in two areas by 35,573 (a total value of $262,051). We have successfully negotiated a restitution plan with OTTE for making good the delivery of these hours in 2004.

1.3. **Research**

1.3.1 **Evaluation of Research Quality:** The Federal Government through the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) has indicated its need for the universities and Publicly Funded Research Agencies (eg CSIRO) to work together over 2004/5 to prepare for an Australian Research Quality Assessment Framework. It is likely that the UK ‘Research Assessment Exercise’, in operation for the past decade, will form the basis for an Australian framework. Although it is not yet explicitly stated, the university sector anticipates that future research block grants to universities will be based on the outcomes from assessments according to the new framework. RMIT is working with the Australian Technology Network, the AVCC groups including the National Academies to ensure the framework reflects the quality factors relevant to the diverse research and research training base at RMIT.

1.3.2 **RMIT Research Performance:** DEST reported research income for 2003 is 24% higher than 2002, compared to an anticipated sector-wide average increase of around 10%. Final results of the 2003 Research Publications collection show a 30% increase in publications output in 2003 over 2002. This is the third consecutive year that the University has increased its publication output, amounting to a doubling of recorded research publications for RMIT since 2001.

1.3.3 **ARC Industry Linkage Grants** - RMIT has been awarded 11 grants with a total of $2.8 million from July 2004. This funding is matched by industry in cash and in kind support and represents a considerable achievement, across a spread of disciplines. RMIT ranked second in the State in terms of total number of grants after Monash University (19), and ahead of University of Melbourne (9). Within the ATN, RMIT ranked second after the University of Technology Sydney in total dollars awarded for the term of the grant, followed by University of South Australia, Queensland University of Technology and Curtin University of Technology.

2. **Alliances and Partnerships**

2.1. **International partnerships**

2.1.1 An MOU has been signed with the Republic Polytechnic in Singapore. This is Singapore’s newest polytechnic with plans to grow to 13,000 enrolments.
2.1.2 The School of Computer Science has extended its partnership with the African Virtual University and is now providing its computer science programs on an extra 4 campuses in Africa with the possibility of further expansion in 2005.

2.2. Australian Technology Network (ATN)

2.2.1 ATN Research Challenge: The ATN Vice Chancellors have endorsed a program aimed at fostering complimentary research areas across the ATN. The aim is to involve all 5 Universities in a single project, attracting $500,000 per annum over 3 years. Directors & PVC’s of Research are finalising the guidelines and application processes for funding and expect to select the project by years end to commence in 2005.

3. Teaching & Learning – Issues and performance

3.1. Improving performance

3.1.1 A response to the DEST issues paper on Learning and Teaching Performance Fund was submitted in late June. The work we are doing on program renewal and capability agenda redesign will take performance based funding mechanisms into account.

3.1.2 Work is continuing with Pro Vice Chancellors Academic on rationalisation of courses across RMIT.

3.1.3 Three submissions from last years’ RMIT Teaching Award winners have been made to the Australian Awards for University Teaching (AAUT) 2004 Awards.

3.1.4 Course level feedback: In semester 2 students in 11 programs within 6 schools (including international programs) will participate in a course level feedback pilot. The pilot takes into consideration different modes of teaching and learning evident across the university, capturing data that provides the opportunity for benchmarking and validation.

3.2. Awards

3.2.1 Professor Robert Snow, Dean International, SET Portfolio has been named by Engineers Australia as one of the 1000 most influential engineers in Australia. Professor Snow is an expert in environmental engineering and waste management. His development of the Masters/Graduate Certificate of Cleaner Production is regarded by the industry as ground-breaking.

3.2.2 Dr Javid Bayandor, a Research Engineer with the Sir Lawrence Wackett Centre for Aerospace Design Technology, has become the first Australian to win the prestigious ICAS John J Green Award. He was selected for his
exceptional record in fostering international co-operation between scientists.

3.2.3 Ms Nguyen Thi Thu Thao, a 2002/2003 RMIT graduate of Master of Engineering in Systems Engineering has been awarded a Fulbright award for further post graduate studies in the USA. Thao studied Systems Engineering from Hanoi, Vietnam.

3.3 RMIT Enrolments 2004

3.3.1 Higher Education: Government-subsidised targets have been met. International Onshore reached 93% of the target, however total EFTSU numbers are equivalent with 2003. Issues regarding the International Onshore target have been investigated and reported to FAMIC (see 4.1.1 below). 98% of the Australian Fee Payment target was met.

3.3.2 TAFE: We are on track to meet TAFE government funded targets. International Onshore targets increased from 2003, however the Student Contact Hours result is lower. The issues contributing to this have been investigated and discussed under 4.1.1 below).

4 International – Issues & Performance

4.1 International onshore student enrolments

4.1.1 In my last report I indicated that there would be an investigation into the reasons for our fallen international onshore student enrolments. This was conducted and a paper was provided to the last meeting of Finance and Major Initiatives Committee. The main factors contributing to the load and subsequent revenue shortfalls include fluctuations of the Australian dollar; a downturn in commencing numbers in Foundation Studies, TAFE, Post Graduate, particularly in IT; a higher than anticipated attrition rate in Semester 1 for returning students with a similar pattern is anticipated for semester 2; difficulties with commencing target for the Bachelor Communication; a semester 1 recruitment target which did not offset the downturn in the market across the areas identified above. Semester 2 overall commencing targets are tracking well and are expected to be met. However, this will not redress the total load and subsequent revenue shortfall.

5 Major Change Initiatives & Organisational Developments

5.1 Financial Performance

5.1.1 Year-to-date revenue is below budget, as it will be for the full year. This is due mainly to shortfalls in international onshore, international offshore and Australian fee paying revenue. The year-to-date shortfall in revenue is only partially offset by reduced expenditure. Corrective action, through revised maximum expenditure budgets, is about to be implemented to ensure that the 2004 budgeted operating result of $15.2m is achieved.
5.2 Quality Assurance

5.2.1 Quarterly Management Review Report provided to VCEM in June identified the following key issues:

5.2.2 2003 Invalid Module Enrolment (IME): RMIT’s 2003 result in the IME review by Office of Training & Tertiary Education (OTTE) was 2.59% (compared to 0.49% in 2002). While this 2003 result is not as favourable as the previous year, the system wide rate has also increased (to 2.07% from 1.46% in 2002) – due primarily to a change in requirements for appropriate evidencing of student participation in competencies.

5.2.3 International Policy and Procedures: An International Strategic Alliances and Partnerships Policy and Procedures and International Marketing Procedures have been developed and implementation plans are being developed in consultation with each Portfolio area.

5.3 Implementation of restructure

5.3.1 Portfolio Services Integration/ Academic Management System reimplementation: At the last meeting of FAMIC I presented a paper outlining a strategy to move forward the stalled AMS reimplementation and to accelerate the major change program. The Committee noted the paper and suggested that the integration of the key aspects of the major change work outlined in the paper be strengthened via the appointment of a senior project manager. This has now taken place.

5.3.2 The strategy addresses the stalling of the change program and reimplementation process of the AMS by breaking the bottleneck created through the Major Change Group, spreading the accountabilities and integrating this work through the VCE. It addresses the priorities for change, previously presented to Council as part of the VCE work program:

° Reimplementation of the AMS
° Completion of the portfolio restructure
° Redesign and simplification of processes and their underpinning by robust systems
° The embedding of sound financial and planning processes, including linked profiling, workforce planning and capital planning
° The development of clear accountabilities, specified skills and behaviours and performance management.

5.3.3 Together these underpin the improvement of the cost structure, the delivery of more cost effective service delivery to support the academic enterprise and the change to the ways of working and culture envisaged by 'Dissolving the Boundaries'.

6 Staffing

6.1 Industrial update - Enterprise Bargaining

6.1.1 Academic and General Staff: The University has made a revised offer to the NTEU and its academic and general staff. The key benefits of the revised offer are:

- A salary offer of 15% over three years (inclusive of the 3% paid in January this year). This salary outcome will compound to just under 16% over the life of the Agreement;
- Improved maternity leave that will increase the paid component from the existing entitlement of 12 weeks to a total of the equivalent of 26 weeks full pay;
- An increase in the casual loading from 20% to 23%;
- A process for the conversion of long term casual (General) staff,
- Improved employment opportunities for Aboriginal Australians.

6.1.2 In return, the University is seeking agreement in the following key areas:

- Introduction of teaching evaluations for academic staff;
- Additional categories of fixed term employment;
- Deeming of annual leave for academic staff;
- The replacement of Committees of Inquiry (for Disciplinary Procedures and Redundancy Review) with a single independent reviewer; and
- Superannuation flexibility for staff (i.e. flexibility around the 3% Award Plus portion).

6.1.3 The State government has indicated that it will not pay full supplementation for TAFE related staff unless agreement is reached by 30 June. As the RMIT/NTEU negotiations will not work to this deadline we have requested an extension from the State government. If we are unable acquire an extension we will receive 0.75% less supplementation.

6.1.4 TAFE Teaching Staff: The TAFE Teachers’ Multi-Employer Certified Agreement (MECA) and associated Memorandum of Understanding were approved by an overwhelming majority of Victorian TAFE teachers. The certification hearing in the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) is set down for the 28 June 2004. The Agreement provides for a salary increase for most teachers of 17% compounded from 1 September 2003 to 1 September 2007.

6.1.5 Security Staff: RMIT Security Staff have approved the Security Services Staff Enterprise Agreement. The Agreement will be filed in the AIRC for certification by the 11 June 2004. The Agreement provides for annual increases of 3%, 4% and 5% from 1 January 2004. The University has given undertakings to its security staff and their union that the quantum of salary increases applying to academic and general staff will also apply to them.
6.2 Voluntary departure package (VDP) update

6.2.1 A further 5 TAFE Teachers have been approved for departure prior to 30 June 2004. The total departures under the TAFE VDP scheme totals 30. Australian Taxation Office approval for this scheme expires on 30 June 2004. Therefore there will be no further departures under this current scheme.

6.3 Executive appointments

6.3.1 Mr Michael Hansen, Executive Director People and Culture, commenced 8 June 2004.

6.3.2 Ms Lois Fitz-Gerald, Director Resources & Planning, due to commence 14 July 2004.

6.3.3 Ms Marcia Xenitelas, Program Manager, Major Change Group, commenced 31 May 2004.

6.4 Senior Appointments

6.4.1 Assoc Prof Elizabeth Grierson, Head of School, Art & Culture (to commence 24 January 2005)

6.4.2 Judith Bessant, Professor, Youth Studies & Sociology (to commence 12 July 2004)

6.5 Senior/Executive level resignations and retirements

6.5.1 Associate Professor Scott Phillips, Justice & Youth Studies, School of International & Community Services, Portfolio of Design and Social Context, departed on 21 May 2004.

6.5.2 Professor Alan Cumming, who was Acting as PVC Design and Social Context, departed on 30 June 2004. He is replaced in this acting role by Professor Robert Brooks.

6.6 Professorial appointments

6.6.1 Dr John Eady, Adjunct Professor, School of Management, Portfolio of Business.

6.6.2 Dr Ted Lipiarski, Adjunct Professor, School of Management, Portfolio of Business.

6.6.3 Dr Jan Priest, Adjunct Professor, School of Management, Portfolio of Business.
6.6.4 Dr Aaron Ginzburg, Senior Associate, School of Applied Sciences, Portfolio of Science, Engineering & Technology for 3 years from 28 May 2004.

6.6.5 Dr Marcia George, Adjunct Professor, School of Health Sciences, Portfolio of Science, Engineering & Technology for 3 years from 10 May 2004.

Council also noted and discussed:

- Performance Snapshot Report to 31 May 2004

4. DRAFT RMIT INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGY 2004-2006

Council received, considered and discussed the draft RMIT Internationalisation Strategy 2004-2006.

5. NOMINATIONS AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

National Governance Protocols and Workplace Relations Requirements for Higher Education Providers

Council approved the following:

1. The primary responsibilities of Council as set out in Protocol 2 replace the existing primary responsibilities in the RMIT Council Governance Charter 2003
2. Assessment of conformance to protocols be added to work plans for NCGC and Council
3. That elected members be allowed to serve for a maximum of nine years and that as the protocol says the Chancellor should normally chair NCGC a case be provided for retaining the current Chair of NCGC
4. That where high risk has been identified arising from RMIT’s part ownership of any entity that the PVC GG uses his/her best endeavours to obtain as auditor’s report for consideration by the Audit and Risk Management Committee of Council.

6. POLICIES

Council approved:

- RMIT Research Centres Policy
- RMIT Research Centres Policy Guidelines
- RMIT Research Centres Implementation Plan.
7. COMMITTEE MINUTES OR REPORTS

Council received minutes or reports for the following:

- Audit and Risk Management Committee Minutes
- Finance and Major Initiatives Committee Minutes
- Planning, Quality & Performance Committee Minutes
- Nominations & Corporate Governance Committee Report
- Remuneration Committee Report.

8. REPORTS

Council received the following reports:

- Chancellor’s Determination
- Use of the University Seal.

9. SENIOR APPOINTMENTS

Council considered a recommendation on the appointment of a PVC Students.

10. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

- Monday 30 August 2004
- Monday 25 October 2004
- Monday 6 December 2004