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Newsletter

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Greetings from the ACHRC

Thank you for your continued support of the ACHRC. We have been busy in 2012. Our second annual meeting, “Transforming Humanities: Promoting Interdisciplinarity and Collaboration,” was hosted in June by the Transforming Cultures Research Centre at the University of Technology, Sydney. See the report on the meeting below. We timed it to coincide with the annual event of the Consortium of Humanities Centres and Institutes (CHCI) – an international body based at Duke University – hosted by ANU’s Humanities Research Centre. This allowed many of our members to attend both events and contribute to the international network of Humanities research centres.



Now we look to our 2013 meeting, which promises to be a fascinating event, hosted by the Institute of Advanced Studies at the University of Western Australia under the expert guidance of Associate Director Susan Takao. The meeting, with the theme “Spaces and Networks for the Humanities: Building Research Environments,” will be held in July and will house panels on regional connections and networks, the Humanities in the “Asian Century”, building and communicating research environments, the public Humanities, collaborating with collecting institutions, and Environmental Humanities. See the meeting website for more information: <http://www.ias.uwa.edu.au/conf/2013-achrc>

As always, the focus of the 2013 meeting will be on providing opportunities for practical discussion of matters relating to running successful research centres in the Humanities, broadly defined.

In addition to our annual meeting, one of our key objectives for 2013 will be developing a project on the sustainability of Humanities research centres. See below for more information on that initiative.

We will also be expanding our membership base. We will be back in touch early in 2013 to plan for our 2013 membership drive. Early next year you will find our new ACHRC brochure in the mail. We will be asking members to display these on noticeboards at your institution.

We wish you all the best for the new year.

Associate Professor Robert Phiddian
Director, Australasian Consortium of Humanities Research Centres

Report on the 2012 ACHRC AGM Symposium: Transforming the Humanities

The two-day 2012 ACHRC AGM symposium was hosted superbly by the University of Technology Sydney's [Transforming Cultures Research Centre](#), and we extend our thanks to the Centre and particularly to Professor Anne Cranny-Francis and Cornelia Betzler for the outstanding organisation, program design, and event management that made the meeting such a success.



The theme of the 2012 meeting was “Transforming Humanities: Promoting Interdisciplinarity and Collaboration.” The event included an ACHRC Advisory Board meeting and the AGM as well as a series of panels prompting practical discussion around Humanities research centres.

Delegates attended from New Zealand, Singapore, and Germany as well as all parts of Australia, contributing to panels on collaboration, Indigenous research, Links in the Asia-Pacific region, interdisciplinarity, success models and sustainability for centres and institutes, and an afternoon tea for early career researchers to discuss ways the ACHRC and Humanities research centres more broadly can support early and mid-career researchers.

At the Consortium’s AGM, held on the second day, the membership voted to officially become the Australasian Consortium of Humanities Research Centres. This was further strengthened by welcoming Professor Brian Moloughney, from the University of Otago, onto the Advisory Board of the ACHRC. Also joining the board for the first time were Dr Tom Bristow from the University of New England and Dr Arianna Traviglia from Macquarie University. We welcome these members to our board and thank them for their offer of service to the Consortium. Departing the board at the meeting or in the months prior were Professor Kay Ferres, Griffith University, Professor Ian Donaldson, the University of Melbourne, and Professor Iain McCalman, the University of Sydney. We thank these members for their service on the Advisory Board, and for their efforts and enthusiasm in establishing the ACHRC as a vision and as a reality.

Developing a Project on the Sustainability of Humanities Research Centres



Research Centres in Australasian Humanities-based disciplines are diverse and varied and there can be no one size fits all approach to centres. The ACHRC is putting together a project that will set the base for more meaningful and significant forms of comparison, networking, and collaboration between Humanities-based research groups. We expect the project will illuminate the depth and richness of kinds of Humanities research centres in operation in Australasia. It will provide a more nuanced picture of centres and their operation in Australasia.

The project asks: What are the sustainable and effective models for Humanities-based research centres, on different scales and in different institutional settings? What looks like success? What is worth investing in? The Humanities, broadly defined, needs to develop a taxonomy of research centres in Australasia to answer these questions. We seek to gather, assess, analyse and share information about research centres in order to understand them and their many types more fully at the operational level, at the institutional level, and at the national or international level.

The NCRIS process provided a clear map of national research capacity for some sectors and the Humanities would benefit from a similar experience. In the Humanities, we lack clear ways of arguing for the nature and value of local research environments, to government and business, and in research applications.

Preliminary discussion about this project with the ARC, the Academy of the Humanities and with the DASSH Associate Deans (Research) indicates support for the concept. Expect to hear more about this in the coming months, or in the meantime contact us for more information.

In the News...

Professor Philippa Maddern, Director of the Centre for the History of Emotions, [defends the Centre's research funding](#) against opposition finance spokesperson Andrew Robb's statements on the value of research funding in the Humanities.

For more, see: "Link grants to innovation: Libs," Patricia Karvelas and Nicolas Perpetch, *The Australian*, 8 November 2012.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/health-science/link-grants-to-innovation-lib/story-e6frg8y6-1226512584951>

Professor Stuart Cunningham, Director of the Australian Research Council ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation, [discusses the value of research impact measurement](#), pointing out that "there are currently fewer standard indicators for impact in arts and humanities, and academics in these areas are perhaps less experienced in making what are essentially 'business cases' for their impact."

For more, see: "Research reviews pressure academics", Jill Rowbotham, *The Australian*, 5 December 2012.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/research-reviews-pressure->

