



## Forum for European – Australian Science and Technology cooperation

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[www.france.net.au/feast](http://www.france.net.au/feast)

**FEAST Newsletter #3**  
**June 2001**

### **FEAST1- a great success**

The inaugural event of the Forum for European – Australian Science and Technology (FEAST1) was held on 30-31 May in Canberra.

More than 200 invited delegates participated in one of the largest ever gatherings of European and Australian researchers and research managers. Another 150 people watched the web broadcast of the opening and closing sessions.

The delegates at FEAST1 heard some significant announcements that will improve S&T cooperation between Europe and Australia.

The four workshops and working group produced many practical recommendations

to improve S&T cooperation. The FEAST stakeholders have started assessing these recommendations and determining how they could be implemented.

If you would like to contribute to the recommendations please post your ideas on the on-line fora before 22 June. The workshop managers will prepare final reports by the end of June.

An archive of the web broadcast of FEAST1 will be available on the website until the end of June.

An enormous effort was put in to preparing FEAST1. The organisers want to thank everyone who participated in and contributed to the event - congratulations on its success!

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### **Announcements at FEAST1**

In opening FEAST1, Senator the Hon. Nick Minchin, Minister for Industry, Science and Resources, announced dedicated funding of up to \$A 750,000 per year for five years to support Australian participation in European Union Framework Programme projects. These funds will come from the Innovation Access Program and support research and associated activities including networking visits to Europe and strategic workshops.

[www.minister.industry.gov.au/minchin/releases/2001/may/cmr289%2D01.doc](http://www.minister.industry.gov.au/minchin/releases/2001/may/cmr289%2D01.doc)

This funding is in addition to the \$A 600,000 per year announced last year by the National Health and Medical Research Council to assist Australian based researchers participate in successful EU Fifth Framework Programme (Quality of life and management of living resources) projects. [www.health.gov.au/nhmrc/research/special/eu-adv.htm](http://www.health.gov.au/nhmrc/research/special/eu-adv.htm)

Mr Achilleas Mitsos, the European Commission's Director General for Research, announced that the European Commission will provide 250,000 euros (approximately \$A 440,000) over three years to support the establishment of FEAST in Australia.

[www.ecdel.org.au/mediarelease/Mitsosv1.htm](http://www.ecdel.org.au/mediarelease/Mitsosv1.htm)

In his concluding remarks Dr David Kemp MP, Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, announced that the Department of Industry, Science and Resources would provide a grant of \$A 150,000 to FEAST for public awareness activities to further promote Australia-Europe collaboration. [www.isr.gov.au/science/ist/country/eurunion/collab.html](http://www.isr.gov.au/science/ist/country/eurunion/collab.html)

At the end of FEAST 1 HE Mr Lars-Erik Wingren, Ambassador of Sweden, announced on behalf of the EU Presidency, that FEAST is advertising for an Executive Manager to run the secretariat. [www.france.net.au/feast/job.htm](http://www.france.net.au/feast/job.htm)

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### **A request**

To increase the effectiveness of FEAST please pass this newsletter on to anyone you think could be interested in FEAST.

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## Young researchers at FEAST1

The organisers were delighted that twelve young Australian researchers and several young European researchers attended FEAST1. They provided a valuable contribution from a sometimes-ignored perspective. The Australian Academy of Science, the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, the Australian National University and the diplomatic missions of the European Union in Australia sponsored these researchers.

The Australian award winners were: Dr Marcela Bilek and Dr Mohammad Amjad Kamal (University of Sydney), Dr Martin Steinbauer (CSIRO-Entomology), Dr Sabine Piller (St Vincent's Hospital), Dr Samantha Richardson, Dr Rebecca Ford and Dr Simon Milton (University of Melbourne), Ms Lorrae van Kerkhoff and Dr Eva Papp (Australian National University), Dr Katherine Harle (Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, Dr Parisa Bahri (Murdoch University), and Mr Richard Brinkman (James Cook University).

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## The future of FEAST

Some people at FEAST1 asked what happens next, after the first event went so well? The immediate activities are finalising the reports from the workshops and working group and assessing the recommendations from FEAST1.

The funding from the European Commission and Department of Industry, Science and Resources, supplemented by other FEAST stakeholders, provides a basis to establish the FEAST secretariat. An Executive Manager will be appointed by the end of July and his or her first tasks will be to set-up the secretariat and management structure and develop strategic and business plans.

The French Embassy has kindly created and hosted the FEAST website and database up to now. Over the next few months it will be transferred to a permanent location and upgraded.

Finally we plan to hold the second FEAST event (FEAST2) in the next 12 months. If you have any ideas for the theme of FEAST2 please post them on the Working Group 1 discussion forum [www.france.net.au/feast/wg1/](http://www.france.net.au/feast/wg1/)

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## Opportunity to be an expert evaluator for EU proposals

By virtue of the existence of the European Community - Australia S & T Cooperation Agreement, the European Commission invites applications by Australian experts to become evaluators of proposals under the European Community Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development.

The involvement of Australian experts in the EU's evaluation benefits the EU by adding more depth to the "peer review" process. It also provides Australian researchers with an ideal opportunity to gain an insight into the workings of the Framework Programme and the type of work being proposed.

Evaluators receive fees, daily allowances and their travel expenses. Applicants need now only complete a two-page application form and attach a two-page summary CV. For further detail and copies of the application form see: [www.cordis.lu/expert-candidature/](http://www.cordis.lu/expert-candidature/)

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## Statistics on Registrations

Congratulations to Dr Brian Jones from the University of Melbourne who was the 1000th person to register on FEAST. Dr Jones has been sent a small gift from the FEAST stakeholders for his next trip to Europe.

As at 13 June 2001, 1026 people had registered on FEAST. More Australian researchers are registered than European. The leading European countries are France with 156 registrations, the UK 120, Spain 50, Germany 43 and Italy 43. Registrations by Australian State are led by NSW 176, followed by the ACT 173, Victoria 154 and Queensland 150 (See [www.france.net.au/feast/results/](http://www.france.net.au/feast/results/)).

The vast majority of people registered on FEAST are from public sector institutions, 89% of Australians and 64% of Europeans. A clear message from FEAST1 was the need to get more industry involved to make FEAST truly representative and effective in linking people.

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## What is FEAST?

The Forum for European-Australian Science and Technology cooperation (FEAST) was conceived in August 2000 as an initiative of the then French Presidency of the EU for a meeting of European and Australian researchers in Australia. This quickly developed into an ambitious undertaking and has become an ongoing project with the overall aims of:

- ✓ Highlighting existing multilateral and bilateral Science and Technology (S&T) cooperation between Europe and Australia; and
- ✓ Improving this cooperation, particularly multilateral cooperation, through identifying priorities and enhancing the quality, quantity and visibility of future action.

FEAST is being delivered principally in two ways: by establishing an on going electronic forum and holding actual meetings. The FEAST website and database were initially launched in November 2000, with a major upgrade in February 2001, still subject to ongoing improvement and refinement. FEAST1 marked the conclusion of a number of processes to define the future role and structure of FEAST and the practical services it will deliver. Subject to the final outcomes of FEAST1, the specific objectives are:

- ✓ Increasing the links between European and Australian scientists, and between European scientists, and help them forge links with relevant institutions;
- ✓ Better identifying and demonstrating cooperation between Europe and Australia;
- ✓ Better providing information, on a mutual basis, on the S&T of the countries concerned;
- ✓ Better providing information on programs and funding to promote cooperation between Europe and Australia; and
- ✓ Exchanging best practices, and to draft and present in particular fields the state of the art and the prospects for cooperation.

There are perhaps two novel aspects of FEAST: the first is that it particularly targets European researchers in Australia as an unrecognised and under-utilised resource to further broaden cooperation; secondly, all the diplomatic missions of the European Union in Australia are working collectively to enhance S&T cooperation with Australia.

A central tenet of FEAST is inclusiveness. As such it is open to participation from all organisations and individuals with an interest in European – Australian S&T Cooperation. For this reason, most of the key Australian S&T organisations are stakeholders (see below) and where appropriate other organisations will be invited to either become formal stakeholders in FEAST or to be the vehicles by which non-core cooperative activities are pursued.

The philosophy behind FEAST also draws heavily on the European concept of "Variable Geometry", a concept allowing for a selective approach to cooperation on the basis of recognised needs and benefits, so that each stakeholder and individual decides which of the FEAST activities they wish to support. In the light of this, a wide definition of European is taken (although at least initially activities will be limited to European Union Member States). Similarly, a wide interpretation of Science and Technology is utilised (including social sciences and humanities). Likewise, in-principle cooperation of any form will be considered.

It is also recognised that FEAST is a journey, that not all the answers can be provided at this time and that any solutions should have the capacity to evolve and be extendable.

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## FEAST Stakeholders

*European:* Embassy of Austria; Royal Belgian Embassy; Royal Danish Embassy; Embassy of Finland; Embassy of France; Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany; Embassy of Greece; Embassy of Ireland; Embassy of Italy; Royal Netherlands Embassy; Embassy of Portugal; Embassy of Spain; Embassy of Sweden; British High Commission; and the Delegation of the European Commission to Australia and New Zealand.

*Australian:* Australian Academy of Science; Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering; Australian National University; Australian Research Council; Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation; Cooperative Research Centres' Association; Department of Industry, Science and Resources; National Health and Medical Research Council; and Rural R&D Corporations Chairs Committee.

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