



Forum for European-Australian Science and Technology cooperation

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Latest News

ARC Research Networks

The Australian Research Council (ARC) has recently introduced a new program called ARC Research Networks. The new \$37.5million program is designed to encourage collaborative approaches to research in inter-disciplinary settings, by using the Networks as a platform to enhance communication between government and non-government research agencies, researchers, universities and professional organisations; nationally and internationally.

ARC Research Networks will provide an environment supporting highly creative, inter-disciplinary research that focuses on people rather than institutional structures.

The objectives of the ARC Networks scheme are to:

- enhance the scale and focus of research networks in emerging areas;
- **encourage more inter-disciplinary approaches to research;**
- facilitate collaborative and innovative approaches to planning and undertaking research; and
- build global connections between Australian and International researchers.

The funding rules for this new initiative have been approved by The Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Dr Brendan Nelson MP.

The closing date for submission of applications is 22 March 2004. ARC Research Networks funding rules and application forms are available through the ARC's website at <http://www.arc.gov.au>.



Sixth Framework Programme

Although official figures are yet to be released regarding the success of the first wave of proposals for projects under the European Commission's Sixth Framework Programme for Science and Technology (FP6), preliminary indications show that Australian participation in the programme will be quite strong. Of almost 70 proposals received by Brussels, which involved Australian participants, 19 have been retained for funding so far and 6 are on the reserve list. Australia features most strongly in the following areas:

- Energy (2 of 2 retained for funding);
- Environment (of 10 proposals, 2 retained for funding and 2 on the reserve list)
- Information Society Technologies (of 26 proposals, 6 retained and 2 on the reserve list);
- Life Sciences and Health (of 8, 5 retained and 1 on reserve).

We will keep you up-to-date with further developments.

Recent Events

FEAST 'Networking for Excellence' Conference

On 13-14 November 2003, the Australian National University played host to almost 300 scientists, research managers and policy makers, invited by FEAST (The Forum for European-Australian Science and Technology cooperation) to discuss the importance of establishing European and Australian collaboration in Science and Technology. The *Networking for Excellence* conference is the second international event hosted by FEAST, along with the support of the National Europe Centre at the ANU, The Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) and 14 session sponsors.

Twenty European speakers including an unprecedented number of senior officials from the European Commission in Brussels contributed to a strong European presence. This provided an international balance for discussions in both the workshops and plenary sessions. With the opportunity for participants to take advantage of conference breaks to build on existing networks and create new ones.

Conference presentations drew attention to opportunities for cooperation and the need to establish connections between Australia and Europe, given the level of commonality in our priorities and the importance attached by both parties, to increasing the development and quantum of research as a percentage of GDP.



Speakers identified the changing nature of science from discipline-based to a more integrated activity and crystallised issues relevant to the way Australia and Europe support research and technological development and conduct science and technology policy.

Initial reactions to the conference have been positive particularly because it has sparked a series of ongoing dialogues on cooperation. FEAST plans to build on the outcomes and on formal and informal feedback in planning future events.

All conference presentations and a summary of outcomes can be found on our website. For a copy of the FEAST 'Networking for Excellence' Conference CD please contact Michael Parker, FEAST Executive Manager: mparker@feast.org Or visit: www.feast.org/feast4.html



Early Career Researchers

The Australian Academy of Science and the Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering invited applications from early-career researchers to attend the FEAST *Networking for Excellence* conference . The successful scientists were:

- Dr Joanne Blanchfield, Lecturer, School of Molecular and Microbial Sciences, University of Queensland
- Dr Jan Burke, Research Scientist, CSIRO Australian Centre for Precision Optics
- Dr Bryan Fry, Research Fellow, Australian Venom Unit
- Dr Alma Hodzic, Senior Lecturer, School of Engineering, James Cook University
- Dr Cordelia Selomulya, ARC Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Centre for Particle and Catalyst Technologies, the University of New South Wales
- Dr Ashley Townsend, Analytical Chemist, Central Science Laboratory, University of Tasmania

The researchers attended the plenary sessions and the various workshops and were asked to submit a report on their participation on the conference. The reports indicated that the event had been an eye-opener as to the scale and extent of existing and potential research networks between Australia and Europe.

Networking for Excellence provided the scientists with an invaluable opportunity to network with people in related fields, particularly important to young researchers. It also provided important information about the issues between social needs and science.



PictureDr Ashley Townsend, Dr Alma Hodzic, Dr Brian Fry, Dr Joanne Blanchfield, Dr Cordelia Selomulya (in the front) and Dr Jan Burke.



ARIA Meeting 12 November 2003 “Distilling the ARIA Strategy”

On Wednesday 12 November, the Minister for Science, Hon Peter McGauran, joined representatives of ARIA (the Association for Research between Italy and Australasia) as they met to discuss the evolution and the future of the Association.

In opening the ARIA meeting in Canberra, HE Dino Volpicelli, the Italian Ambassador noted: “The creativity and ingenuity of the Italian community is encapsulated in the Association for research between Italy and Australasia”.

Scientists of Italian origins from the ACT, NSW, Victoria, WA, SA and QLD, presented to the Minister and the Ambassador the past activities and their future plan to strengthen the bilateral research relationship between Italy and Australia.

During the past year, ARIA has organised and supported 4 bilateral scientific workshops. These workshops were focused on ecotoxicology, applied mathematics, the synchrotron, and scientific parks.

The association has recently extended in Italy as ARIA-ITALIA. The Italian branch of the association will act as a receiver of the signals sent by the Australian scientists and it will spread the message through the Italian scientific community.

During the meeting, Prof Nicolais, Regional Minister for University, and Scientific Research of the Regione Campania, announced the funding of fifteen fellowships. These represent a total amount of \$135,000, (\$90,000 from Regione Campania and \$45,000 from the Australian Universities) to support ten young Australian researchers to spend three months in the Campania region Research Centres and five Italian researchers to spend three months in the facilities of the Australian funding University.

At this meeting Prof Nicolais signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Prof Michael D’Occhio of the University of Queensland. The Memorandum of Understanding in the area of biotechnology will improve the cooperation between the Australian Universities and the Campania Region Research Centres.

In closing the meeting, Minister McGauran congratulated the ARIA managers and stated: “Your achievements and your planned activities are valuable for the enhancement of the cooperation between Italy and Australia”.



Commission Officials' visit to Australia during the FEAST 4 conference

A delegation of seven officials of the European Commission came to Canberra to participate in the FEAST *Networking for Excellence* conference in November. The delegation was headed by Dr Christian Patermann, Director, Environment within the Commission's Directorate-General for Research, and also involved high-level officials from other parts of the Research DG as well as the DG for Information Society. The officials played a leading role in both the plenary sessions and the workshops.

Just prior to the Conference, the EC Delegates took part in the 7th annual Australia-EU high-level talks on Science and Technology. These discussions are “whole of Government” and involve stakeholders from all Government agencies. The EC Delegates also had individual meetings with various officials and scientists. These bilateral meetings presented opportunities to enhance closer collaboration between Australia and Europe on a wide range of issues.



FEAST-France

FEAST-France major events on 12 November 2003

- **Signature of the French-Australian Science & Technology program and National Launch of FEAST-France**

A new French-Australian Science and Technology Program (**FAST**) was signed during a presentation before a packed audience at the Australian Academy of Science in Canberra on 12 November. The two signatories were the Hon. Peter McGauran, Australian Minister for Science, and H.E. Patrick Henault, Ambassador of France.

This program establishes for the first time:

- A joint DEST-French Embassy **Call for Proposals**. Each country will contribute up to AUD 250,000 to support workshops and collaborative research projects. The program is open to both public and private researchers.
- A joint **steering committee** for S&T cooperation.
- A joint **expert panel**.

The first Call for Proposals will open in January 2004. Information about the Call will be on the FEAST-France website (<http://www.ambafrance-au.org/science/>) and members of FEAST-France will receive an alert email as soon as possible.

Following the signing, the Hon. Peter McGauran and H.E. Patrick Henault proceeded to the **National Launch of FEAST-France**. Liaison Officers and Program Managers of Toulouse, Clermont-Ferrand, Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne provided examples of their activities.

The simultaneous launch of FAST and FEAST-France is **the biggest French-Australian intergovernmental research event since 1991**, when the agreements setting up the Marine Science Cooperation Committee and the French-Australian Industrial Research Program (FAIR) were signed.

- **Training session and Steering Committee of FEAST-France**

More than 40 FEAST-France Liaison Officers and Program Managers, coming from 6 French cities and 7 Australian states or territories, spent a full day at the National Europe Center before the *Networking for Excellence* Conference.

The morning meeting was a training session in which the French Embassy explained the concept and objectives of FEAST-France, and the roles and practical activities of the Liaison Officers and Program Managers.

The afternoon session was a steering meeting to discuss and design together the objectives and activities of FEAST-France for 2004.

- **See the coming FEAST-France Newsletter** to get more information about FAST, about the articulation between FAST, FEAST-France and FEAST, and to get the 2003 report and the draft 2004 activity of FEAST-France.

The FEAST-France Newsletter is sent to all FEAST-France members and can also be found on the FEAST-France website (<http://www.ambafrance-au.org/science/>).

Grant Highlights

Innovation Access Program- International Science & Technology

The Innovation Access programme is an initiative of the Government's Innovation Statement "Backing Australia's Ability".

The programme aims to promote innovation and competitiveness by increasing Australian access to global research and technologies and facilitating their uptake by Australian researchers and firms, particularly small to medium enterprises (SMEs).

This new program will provide support for participation in the Sixth Framework Programme.

The call for the next application round opens on the 2 February 2004 and will close on 1 March 2004.

Information and guidelines are available from <http://www.dest.gov.au/science/iap/> or by contacting the International Science & Technology Policy and Programmes Section by email: ist@dest.gov.au or by phone: (02) 6240 5014.

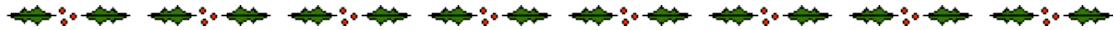
This is not a comprehensive list of funding opportunities available. Please look at the feast website for further information under Australian and European Funding services.

Other News

Redevelopment of the FEAST Website

As you may already know, the FEAST website has recently been redeveloped. If any FEAST members have not already done so, could you please re-register to ensure your membership remains current and accurate. We apologise for the inconvenience this may cause, but we are confident members will benefit from this improvement.

To re-register please click on this link: www.feast.org



Share Your Experiences

The FEAST office would like to hear from researchers including industry researchers already or previously involved in European-Australian collaboration. Don't waste your valuable experience; consider sharing it with others through our newsletter.

Publication in our newsletter is free. Your contributions may be edited for clarity.



Christmas Greeting

Everyone at the FEAST office would like to wish our readers a very
Merry Christmas
And a
Safe and Happy New Year!

