

*Faculty of Education*

# Research Bulletin

## Research Planning

### THE BIG NEWS – FACULTY RESEARCH & SCHOLARSHIP RETREAT

Theme: Building  
Research Community  
and Strategic Action

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November  
arrive for Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup>  
November full day  
program

Where: Beechworth  
campus

Who: All academic and  
research support staff

Guest speaker:  
Professor Erich  
Weigold, PVC Research

Details to follow in  
forthcoming Research  
Bulletin issues.

You will be aware from the Dean's reporting in the August 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the Ed-News that exciting developments are taking place in the Faculty's research planning. To keep everyone well informed about planned activities the 'Research Bulletin' will become a regular bulletin. This first edition of the Research Bulletin is an important step in our Faculty Plan to increase research activity and support staff in their endeavours. I hope you will welcome this addition in your mailbox and more importantly make contributions for sharing with colleagues.

From the research desk it seems that the one major item that persists is the RQF (Research Quality Framework). Its time line and how all Faculties can prepare for this process are critical for our future. The

### RQF

The RQF mock audit conducted by the Faculty highlighted our need to be very proactive in the research area. Can we do it? Well that's our collective challenge – it provides

one thing certain is that one way or another we will all be involved. The detail is rolling out from Canberra on a regular basis and this will filter to all of us through the various committees within the University<sup>1</sup>. My suggestion is that it is worth bookmarking the DEST web site for an occasional check on developments. No doubt you will be aware that Minister Bishop is taking a keen interest in RQF developments. Two current working parties are worth following closely. They are the Metrics Working Group and the Impact Working Group. The determination to link funding to evidence based assessment of research outputs relates closely to both impact and quality. We can no longer claim 'excellence' in our outputs - we have to be able to 'prove these'. I have an interesting paper on metrics which I

opportunities and good cause to gather our energies to construct that environment where we can make headway – together. To kick start this process we need time to think and

will happily share – please email me for a copy.

You may think much of this high level discussion is unrelated to daily life as a lecturer in each of the Faculty's schools. Far be it from the truth. Faculty research grants, beginning researcher grants and internal funding for research in one way or another can be linked back to our productivity outputs. The more we can produce which meets the DEST guidelines for publications the more money available at school level to fund colleagues and post-graduate students for their projects – including conference funds. So we need to get started on a pathway to enhance our collective capacity and set targets that will enhance our outputs.

***In brief, we need a spin doctor.***

time to get smart. So... put 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> November in your diary.

***Find us on the web at [www.latrobe.edu.au/education/research](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/education/research)***



<sup>1</sup> See—[http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research\\_sector/policies\\_issues\\_reviews/key\\_issues/research\\_quality\\_framework/rqf\\_development\\_2006.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/policies_issues_reviews/key_issues/research_quality_framework/rqf_development_2006.htm)



**Dr Margaret Robertson  
Associate Dean (Research)**

## Research and Scholarship Retreat

The purpose of the Retreat is to provide us with some 'mind space' to work in small cluster groups related to individual

research areas and areas of focus for the scholarship of teaching and learning. Being in the (semi) relaxed spaces of Beechworth

campus will afford us time for spirited talk and camaraderie. For this to happen we need to do some preparation.

## Research Working Party

The Retreat is part of the Faculty's determination to mentor and support colleagues in their scholarship of research and teaching and learning. The outputs identified by DEST for the RQF assume certain levels of achievement. We need to build our strength to achieve these targets.

Part of that is an ongoing need for professional learning and personal development.

To help this process the Dean, Heads of School and their nominees are currently working on a strategy to involve all staff working in clusters around which they

will be able to seek support for personal research activities and scholarship of learning and teaching foci. Negotiated outcomes are to be part of the collective endeavour. More on this will follow in the next issue.

**"See you at the  
Faculty Research  
Retreat on the  
beautiful Beechworth  
campus in  
November!"**

## Role of the Associate Dean (Research)

The role of Associate Dean Research is new and I am a newcomer to the Faculty. Together I hope we can work towards active strategies for mutual support in our individual research endeavours and also towards more awareness of the many interesting projects currently being conducted by our colleagues.

To achieve the latter goal this first edition includes another first – the **\*Research Snippet**. Dr Wan Ng and Dr Howard Nicholas report on their research with Pocket PCs. Another of Wan's activities is the *ICT research interest group*. Convened by Wan this cluster group brings together colleagues from all

campuses. It provides a wonderful example of the special interest group activities from which research collaboration can grow. Congratulations Wan and colleagues!

\*Each edition will include a similar report related to other research activities in the Faculty.

## Research Snippet—Our Colleagues at Work

*Pocket PCs for the mGeneration* Dr Wan Ng and Dr Howard Nicholas

This project is being undertaken in co-operation with Balwyn North Primary School, Broadmeadows Primary School, Streeton Primary School, Box Forest Secondary College and Fawkner Secondary College. The project is about documenting the long term effectiveness of the use of Pocket PCs when they are integrated into general

teaching and learning. The initial research will involve establishing patterns of teacher and student use of the Pocket PCs across Literacy, Maths, Science and Extension programs; analysing student performance to establish baseline levels of performance for the various cohorts of students in Pocket PC and (relevant) control group classes and tracking teacher and students' beliefs and attitudes toward the use of Pocket PCs in the

classroom.

Dr Howard Nicholas and Dr Wan Ng have been contracted by the schools to investigate the extent to which the Pocket PCs contribute to improving student learning outcomes and what is needed to enable teachers to use the technology effectively. See <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/educationalstudies/mgeneration.htm>



**"Beware the man of one  
book"  
(Thomas Aquinas)**