

## DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (RESEARCH)

# UNSW



### RESEARCH BULLETIN #4 25 October 2007

PROFESSOR LES FIELD

DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR  
(RESEARCH)

Dear Colleagues,

This is DVC (Research) Bulletin #4 to provide an update on important issues affecting researchers at UNSW. If you missed the previous bulletins – the contents are available at <http://www.dvcresearch.unsw.edu.au/newsletter/Bulletin3.pdf>

#### 1. **The UNSW Near-Miss Goldstar Awards**

ARC and NHMRC project grants were, announced ahead of schedule, about 3 weeks ago. This year, we will award about \$2.3M in near-miss “Goldstar” grants to applicants who just missed out on ARC or NHMRC project grants. The aim of this program is specifically to provide some support to assist applicants in pulling together a more competitive application in future external grant rounds. We are in the process of contacting those who have been successful in winning Goldstar grants and a full list of successful Goldstars will be available on the Grants Management Office Website within the next few days

#### 2. **Vice-Chancellor’s Post-doctoral Fellowships and VC’s Research Fellowships**

This year, the VC’s Postdoctoral Fellowships will be offered to those people who just missed out on being awarded ARC or NHMRC Postdoctoral Fellowships and Research Fellowships. Altogether 8-10 Fellowships will be offered and we have just sent out the first set of offers to those who had applied under the ARC schemes. NHMRC has yet to release the results of their junior fellowship rounds and these will probably be delayed now until after the Federal election. The Fellowships will be at 2 levels from 2008 – the **VC’s Postdoctoral Fellowships** for fellows who applied at Level A and the **VC’s Research Fellowships** for those who applied for fellowships at Level B or for QE-II fellowships. All Fellowships are for 3 years, commencing at the beginning of 2008 and carry maintenance support of \$8K p.a.

#### 3. **Bridging Support Fellowships**

This is to remind staff that we do have a series of Bridging Support Fellowships available to those researchers who have been awarded an ARC/NHMRC research grant but do not have salary support. If you know researchers who fall into this category please have them contact my office.

#### 4. **Grant Size of ARC/NHMRC grants**

Now that the dust has almost settled on the outcomes of the ARC and NHMRC project grants to commence in 2008, we have been drilling down into various performance metrics for UNSW. It is clear that we have done well and our results put us well amongst the Go8 research intensive Universities. The stand-out area which needs real attention is our average grant size which is not only well below the average across the Go8 but also well below the national average across all Australian Universities. We haven’t finished analysing this yet, but it is clear that, compared to research programs funded at other Universities, UNSW researchers don’t appear to tackle projects which are really significant, big and bold. We also tend to under-resource the projects in our applications – compared to other institutions, our budgets are leaner and probably underestimate the proper cost of infrastructure and resources taking on significant research programs. Please take note of this as you formulate applications for next year.

## **5. Research Strategy Office - Strategic Advice on new grants**

In a previous Bulletin, I indicated that we were setting up a Research Strategy Office and that one of its functions was to provide assistance to staff in constructing professional grant applications which have the best possible chance of success. We have just engaged Professor Alan Johnson to assist with the grant formulation process between now and next March i.e. in the run up to the next main round of ARC grants. Professor Johnson was one of the Executive Director's of the ARC and had responsibility for the Biological Sciences and Biotechnology panel of the ARC. He has a wide-ranging understanding (and inside-knowledge) of how the ARC operates. Until earlier this year, Alan was DVC(R) at the University of Adelaide and now spends his time as a professional consultant working with people to develop strong grant proposals to various agencies. At UNSW, Alan will start to work as a priority with staff whose applications we classed as "near miss grants" in the last ARC round and with some of our Early Career Researchers. Alan will also be talking to small groups of potential applicants for next years ARC round about strategies and to answer individual queries. He will also be working one-on-one with applicants through the early part of 2007 to develop strong proposals. Other staff in the Research Strategy Office will also come on-line in the immediate future to provide assistance with writing/editorial skills, formulating budgets etc.

## **6. Grant-funded Research Student Scholarships**

Researchers who were awarded ARC and NH&MRC grants in the recent rounds and wish to advertise scholarships for new PhD/Masters students should work on advertisements immediately and arrange to have their ads placed on their School/Faculty web sites by late November so that these scholarships can be linked to the Graduate Research School web site (contact Tilly Boleyn [tilly@unsw.edu.au](mailto:tilly@unsw.edu.au) for assistance). Unsuccessful APA/UPA a scholarship applicants will be directed to this scholarship list automatically in mid-December/January.

## **7. UNSW Centres Secretariat.**

UNSW currently has about 70 Research Centres or Institutes. These Centres all bring together groups of individuals with a common research theme – often across Schools or Faculties within the University and also outside UNSW. The critical element is that Research Centres must add value to our research effort and that there is some obvious advantage in having the Centre in place (in contrast to individuals working independently). The establishment of a UNSW Centre recognises a particular concentration of research effort but also gives the Centre status within the University and the ability to undertake activities with the UNSW name and imprimatur. We also have a formal process for monitoring and reviewing of UNSW Centres periodically. For additional information regarding Research Centres at UNSW please contact Leigh Schwartzkoff, Manager, Centres Secretariat ([L.Schwartzkoff@unsw.edu.au](mailto:L.Schwartzkoff@unsw.edu.au))

Please forward this Bulletin to all members of staff. If you have any questions or require further information on any of the above please email [enquiries.research@unsw.edu.au](mailto:enquiries.research@unsw.edu.au)

Regards,

**Les Field**  
**Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)**