



**MACQUARIE
UNIVERSITY**

FACULTY OF SCIENCE

Macquarie-Ryde Futures Partnership

Progress Report First Quarter 2012

Since execution of the MOU in mid-December 2011, priority has been given to getting activities underway in the priority areas identified by City of Ryde in the MOU. The Research Development Grant allocated to the MRFP Project allowed appointment of replacement staff to relieve the Director of teaching duties. Two staff members appointed to this position (Dr Fiona Miller and Dr Alison Ziller) commenced duties in February and will also contribute to the MRFP.

The first meeting of the Partnership Steering Committee is scheduled to be held this month (20.03.12).

Progress Overview (by project)

	Project	MQ Depts	City of Ryde \$	Status 20/3/12
X	1. COIN – Computing Application	Computing, Env & Geog	\$60,000	Shelved as a partnership project and sent to external consultants
✓	2. COIN – Social Data	Marketing & Management	\$50,000	Project led by Dr Jana Bowden-Everson. Mtg with Council staff
✓	3. Waste to Energy	Env & Geog, Elec Eng	\$50,000	Project commenced. First progress meeting 06.03.12 Extension to ARC LP or alternative under active consideration. Report due early May
~	4. Workforce Plan	Marketing & Management, Env & Geog	\$20,000	Delayed after initial meeting in November . Director convened meeting to review after meeting with CoR and FBE staff. Meeting 08.03.12 resolved solution for initial data (MQ associate) and process for work to be scheduled for next round of reporting (2013).
~	5. Macquarie Park Transport Issues (PMD Trial)	LTC, Env & Geog, MMCCS, Access MQ	TBD	This is a complex project that has been the focus of several discussions between the Director, GM Public Works and researchers (Dowling, LTC; Simpson, MMCCS, Ruming, E&G) and others. Project proposal is in preparation.
✓	6. Review of Public Affairs Unit	Marketing & Management, AccessMQ	\$35,000	Recommended consultant employed through AccessMQ. Project commenced
~	7. Centre for Designing Better Cities	Property, Env & Geog, DVC-R; UTS. CoR GM	TBD	This proposal arises from an unsuccessful CRC bid in October 2011 and has progressed through several consultative meetings with UTS's lead consultant, MQ and CoR as well as other commercial partners associated with Macquarie Park and partners associate with a second case study in WA's Pilbara region. Discussions are still underway.

Integration of the partnership project into various aspects of **university operations** continues to be a key task in developing the MRFP. The scope of the MRFP encompasses not only successful research-based activities, but also utilisation of opportunities in the Learning & Teaching program, particularly related to the PACE initiative, Social Inclusion and Student Experience, particularly related to relationships with local agencies, community groups and student groups, and aspects of the site development and master plan for the site, both in terms of research opportunities, and as an important institutional interface between the University and the Council.

Operational area	Activities	Status
Major Projects Voluntary Planning Agreement (Macquarie Park precinct)	Meetings with Mark Broomfield and Gavin Carrier	Bi-monthly meetings scheduled Outcomes to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion of CRC and post-CRC project plans - Connection between Office of Major Project and Bachelor of Planning program - Identification of issues in research program requiring integration with Major Projects - Ongoing discussion of possible research projects PACE sees CoR as an important partner for a range of projects. In addition, CoR will have an interest in a range of PACE projects with other local partners. Objective of current MRFP-PACE action is to ensure that Director knows all activities occurring within CoR arising from PACE, and is in a position to assist and support. Principle responsibility for projects remains with PACE. Initial meeting between PACE team, academics and CoR staff postponed from Feb to May as insufficient lead time was available for Semester 1 activities. Rescheduled to May 15.
PACE Integration	Meeting with entire PACE team Tracker training Consideration of specific units – meetings to be arranged	Irregular meetings as needed, with discussions about collaboration with local agencies as priority. Aiming to revitalise research activities related to Ivanhoe Estate, Optus and others developed through CRSI previously. This project will be led by the Director and will seek funding from Student Experience, Major Project, NSW Government and Council to develop a long-term evidence-based management strategy. Project drafting commenced and will be finalised in May 2012 for discussion with partners
Social Inclusion	Meetings with PVC-SI; Salvation Army; Student Experience	Initial meeting. Arrangement to direct 2.5-5.0% of project fees to MRFP Project Account to support admin costs and to reduce Access/Departmental fees for major projects within the MRFP. Discussions continuing as required.
Student Accommodation	Proposal to use undergrad planning and postgrad SIA students to develop long term SIA	Initial meeting. Awaiting Steering Group advice. Website should be linked to central site (Research? SI? Should it also be linked from other areas including PACE and Major Projects?)
Access MQ	Management of appointments, contracts and other matters	There is a need to brief Executive Deans, convene Research Projects Group and recruit research leaders etc. This is priority for second half semester 1.
Marketing	Need to develop web presence	
Faculties	Next activity area	

Funding and longer term planning: In past reports I've suggested that adequate funding for the partnership in its initial two-year period (where the role of Director is covered by the MRDG funding) will rely on developing a revenue stream that provides resources for:

- Research support funds for research leaders (\$3-5K pa for 5 research leaders, plus \$2K pa for deputies) (\$35K)
- Funds for a small pool of competitive internal grants to initiate new projects with CoR as a research partner (\$15K to support upto 5 projects annually of upto \$5K each) (\$15K)
- Funds for MRFP mentors (\$2-5K pa for 3-5 emeritus or retired staff to act as research and program mentors to MQ and CoR staff in developing and advancing projects) (\$10K)
- Publication funds, administrative support funds

Discussions have been initiated with AccessMQ to allow direction of fees from projects run through AccessMQ to the MRFP Project Account, but even if all the anticipated projects were handled in this way, that would produce less than \$5K per year. I will also direct some portion of research funding received for the proposed SIA on student accommodation to this purpose, but again that will not generate the necessary funds. It is recommended that an alternative revenue stream be identified and I will raise this with the Steering Group when it meets.

Institutional cultures: One of the key issues in advancing the MRFP is the contrasting institutional cultures, which will require some patience and vigilance to address. In mid-February I initiated a basic review of ongoing projects, including progress reviews on all those projects identified as priority areas by Council in the MOU. While some have progressed smoothly – most notably the Waste-to-Energy project with Professor Town and Associate Professor Strezov – others have been more problematic. After initial enthusiasm for the Workforce Planning project in a meeting in November which explored collaboration between Council and the Dept of Marketing & Management, my review suggested that nothing had progressed on this important topic, despite Council's pressing deadline for its initial workforce report. (late-March). I met with the Council team involved to clarify needs, and with FBE staff to clarify their needs. It seems that a 'hiccup' arising from misunderstandings had meant that no progress had been made and that everyone was waiting for others to initiate the next step. I convened a meeting of all parties, and also invited staff and associates from Environment & Geography with relevant skills to review the situation. This led to Council contracting Mr Frank Siciliano, an associate in E&G, to very quickly deliver a review of available data and present appropriate graphs and maps and other advice. The Centre for Workforce Futures had not scheduled any time to the task and was unable to reorganise activities to meet the impending deadlines, and the demography staff had not identified an opportunity for their skills to be drawn into the work required. There is a prospect for development of a module or modules of student work in the demography and social geography programs to provide Council with regularly updated data in future, and a meeting will be scheduled in May between Centre for Workforce Futures and Council staff to allow scoping and scheduling of work required for the next workforce planning exercise. This experience has emphasised the importance of regular reviews of projects.

In response to the learning arising from this situation, I propose that I seek to raise the profile of the MRFP by meeting with each of the Executive Deans and as many Department Heads as I am able to in coming months, and advancing development of a web site to provide overview information about the partnership.

Staff Mentoring and Project Development: In my role as Professor of Human Geography, I continue to provide support and mentoring to a range of staff across the Department of Environment & Geography and the social sciences more generally. In this role, I am conscious of the value of ECRs developing an effective research program that integrates local research opportunities and resources with their development as excellent teachers and opportunities arising from the PACE initiative in the local area. In this quarter I have met several times with Dr Michael Chang, recently appointed as a Geographical Information Sciences specialist and begun exploring ways to link Council's GIS capacities, needs and interests (reflected in a range of programs, including COIN, Workforce Planning and PMD Trials) to his own research and teaching programs and have organised for Dr Chang to meet with relevant Council staff later this month. I am also exploring with other colleagues opportunities to revive the ARC LP focused on the Ivanhoe Estate which lapsed about 12-18 months ago following some very promising initial developments. I will continue looking for these opportunities to link the MRFP to career development opportunities for staff as appropriate.

Unplanned and additional activities: During a project review meeting for the Waste-to-Energy project, the possibility of space to undertake a range of energy and environmental research related activities within the Macquarie Park region was mentioned. This opportunity has been taken up with both the DVC-R and Director, Major Projects for further discussion and has been further discussed with the General Manager and GM Public Works at Council.

During this quarter, I was also involved as FoRC Champion for FoRC 1600 (Studies in Human Society) for ERA2012. I am maintaining progress as a Chief Investigator on two ARC Projects (ARC LP0882152 Community spirit, social transformation, sustainable partnerships; ARC DP110101721 Social conditions of Aboriginal people in rural NSW), and supervisor HDR students, two students HGEO810 in a project involving evaluation of the Mt Druitt Community & Environment Project (a collaboration between community partners, UWS, UTS, NSW Housing and Mission Australia), organising IAG2012, the annual conference of the Institute of Australian Geographers, and chairing the Science Sub-Committee of the University Human Research Ethics Committee. I have also been invited to join the Faculty of Science Research Committee.



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