Developing a collaborative national postgraduate research program for 22 Australian film schools

Final Report 2014

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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACUADS</td>
<td>Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFTRS</td>
<td>Australian Film, Television and Radio School (previously Australian Film and Television School)</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFDA</td>
<td>The South African School of Motion Picture Medium and Live Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGM</td>
<td>Annual General Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALTC</td>
<td>Australian Learning and Teaching Council Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>APA</td>
<td>Australian Postgraduate Award</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARC</td>
<td>Australian Research Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASA</td>
<td>Australian Screen Academy</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASPERA</td>
<td>Australian Screen Production Educational and Research Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BON</td>
<td>Bond University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSYF</td>
<td>Barque Stefano Yinikurtira Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAPA</td>
<td>CILECT Asia-Pacific Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARA</td>
<td>CILECT Africa Regional Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCTV</td>
<td>Closed circuit television</td>
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<tr>
<td>CILECT</td>
<td><em>Centre International de Liaison des Ecoles de Cinéma et de Télévision</em> (English: International Association of Film and Television Schools)</td>
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<tr>
<td>COFA</td>
<td>College of Fine Arts (UNSW)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRC</td>
<td>Cooperative Research Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSU</td>
<td>Charles Sturt University</td>
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<tr>
<td>CU</td>
<td>Curtin University of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCA</td>
<td>Doctorate of Creative Arts</td>
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<td>DEA</td>
<td>Deakin University</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEET</td>
<td>Department of Employment, Education and Training</td>
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<td>DEEWR</td>
<td>Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations</td>
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<td>DEST</td>
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<td>DIISRE</td>
<td>Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research</td>
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<td>DIISRTE</td>
<td>Department of Innovation, Industry, Science, Research and Tertiary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECU</td>
<td>Edith Cowan University</td>
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<tr>
<td>ERA</td>
<td>Early Career Researcher</td>
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<td>ECU</td>
<td>Excellence in Research for Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAMU</td>
<td>Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>FoR</td>
<td>Field of Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLIN</td>
<td>Flinders University</td>
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<tr>
<td>GFS</td>
<td>Griffith Film School</td>
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<tr>
<td>GU</td>
<td>Griffith University</td>
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<tr>
<td>HDR</td>
<td>Higher Degree by Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAT</td>
<td>La Trobe University</td>
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<td>MA</td>
<td>Master of Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAQ</td>
<td>Macquarie University</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCC</td>
<td>Media Communication and Culture</td>
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<td>MEL</td>
<td>The University of Melbourne</td>
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<tr>
<td>MON</td>
<td>Monash University</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUR</td>
<td>Murdoch University</td>
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<tr>
<td>NASS</td>
<td>National Academy of Screen and Sound (Research Centre)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBN</td>
<td>National Broadband Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>NHMRC</td>
<td>National Health and Medical Research Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OADF</td>
<td>The Oxford Academy of Documentary Film</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLT</td>
<td>Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OzCo</td>
<td>Australia Council for the Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy</td>
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Executive summary

Developing a collaborative national postgraduate research education program for screen producers potentially has many educational, cultural and commercial benefits. To achieve this potential a number of major structural, funding and practice-based research problems need to be addressed. This project initiated sector-wide consultations regarding the conditions required for a viable postgraduate research education. Building upon the Western Australian experience with inter-campus collaboration, the project sought to map out a synergistic network of national screen production research hubs, regional nodes and local knowledge trails. This framework was used to form an interim inter-university research centre that actively sought production grants for staff-led collaborative research projects with postgraduate places. The organisational task was undertaken in partnership with 22 Australian screen production institutions and with a range of other national and international collaborators.

The project had two overarching aims:

(i) To identify factors that could give rise to sustainable collaborative postgraduate research education (screen production) in Australian film schools

(ii) To outline a national strategic plan for a sustainable postgraduate research education (screen production) in Australian film schools.

The project deliverables were built upon the following documented activity:

- a series of sector-wide consultations and consciousness-raising forums focusing on the importance of postgraduate screen production research in the ASPERA sector
- a series of round-table workshops that used available survey data to identify issues impeding the development of postgraduate research within 22 film schools
- the establishment of an effective interim collaborative inter-university research centre with a postgraduate focus
- a series of workshops to develop five state-based collaborative staff-led, grant-based projects with inbuilt postgraduate research component
- the formulation of the Memorandum of Understanding for the establishment of the Australian Screen Academy Research Centre; this also documented the governance structure for the Centre
- hosting of the National Colloquium on postgraduate research which included international contribution
- preparation of a special issue of IM: Interactive Media refereed e-journal featuring papers from the National Colloquium; this journal issue will be published towards the end of 2013
- preparation of A National Strategic Plan for sustainable postgraduate research in Australian film schools.

The outcomes of these activities were to:

- facilitate sector-wide collaboration amongst screen academic researchers associated with postgraduate research supervision
- develop an innovative and sustainable template for the postgraduate screen production research sector in higher education
- facilitate the collaborative development of more ambitious screen projects in the
university screen production sector
• foreshadow opportunities for screen postgraduate students to work in industry
• foreshadow opportunities for mentoring new generations of research leaders in the screen production sector.

The project is expected to lead to a more directed, sustainable and mix-funded national postgraduate research education in screen production, one that has local as well as global connections.

Factors that could give rise to a sustainable collaborative postgraduate research education in Australian film schools are described in Part A of this report under the subheading of Towards the National Strategy.

A National Strategic Plan for sustainable postgraduate research education (screen production) in Australian film schools is described in Part B of this report along with relevant recommendations.
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PART A

1. Developing a collaborative national postgraduate research education program for 22 Australian film schools: towards a national strategy

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Postgraduate Research in Screen Production

Screen production is a complex, inter-disciplinary and group-based activity. Because of its complexity most undergraduate and honours students commit themselves to the straightforward version of the production process – namely the making of short productions. Most postgraduate researchers simply extend the short production form to longer forms such as feature films and documentaries, outputs that reflect the most common forms found in industry.

From the point of view of future planning there are two problems with this conventional postgraduate research path:

It is politically unrealistic and economically unsustainable to expect all screen production postgraduate researchers to produce expensive feature length “masterpieces” in a country that has a small and marginal film industry. It is likely that only exceptional candidates will be able to work in this market-driven format.

In a world that is ever more reliant on image communication the domain of screen production is ever expanding and changing. These changes should be reflected in any postgraduate program.

Both problems have a bearing on the viability of postgraduate research education. The central task of this project was to examine if these problems could be solved through institutional and academic collaboration and by alternative paradigms of screen production research.

1.1.2 Project Aims

The project had two overarching aims:

(i) To identify factors that could give rise to a sustainable collaborative postgraduate research education in Australian film schools. These are described in Part A of this report.

(ii) To outline a national strategic plan for sustainable postgraduate research development in Australian film schools. This plan is described in Part B of this report along with relevant recommendation.

Developing A Collaborative National Postgraduate Research Education Program for 22 Australian Film Schools was an Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) funded initiative conducted as a partnership between the National Academy of Screen and Sound (NASS) Research Centre, Murdoch University, and Flinders University, Griffith University, RMIT University, Sydney University of Technology and Victorian College of the Arts, The University of Melbourne.
1.1.3 Innovation and Development Scheme

This study was funded in 2011 under the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (now OLT) Innovation and Development Program.

1.1.4 Project Team

The team consisted of the project leader, Associate Professor Josko Petkovic, and 8 other collaborators:

- Dr Leo Berkley, RMIT University. Dr Berkley was on leave from his duties for one semester and was replaced by Rachel Wilson during his absence.
- Professor Herman van Eyken, Griffith University
- Professor Ian Lang, Victorian College of the Arts, The University of Melbourne who subsequently left his position at The University of Melbourne and was replaced with Ms Annabelle Murphy, also from the Victorian College of the Arts, The University of Melbourne.
- Associate Professor Gillian Leahy, Sydney University of Technology
- Mr Nick Oughton, Griffith University
- Dr Alison Wotherspoon, Flinders University

Project manager:
Ms Linda Butcher, Educational Development Unit, Murdoch University

External assessor:
Professor Su Baker, Director of the VCA, The University of Melbourne

Each partner played an active role in the project’s activities. Team members collaborated on various consultations, workshops, colloquiums and other dissemination activities in five states as well as in Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

1.1.5 Reference Group

The reference group for this project consisted of representatives from 18 institutions that were, or had been, member-institutions of the Australian Screen Production Education and Research Association (ASPERA). In addition to these 18 institutions there were four other institutions where practice-based research was emerging or where there were staff known to be screen production practitioners. These included The University of Notre Dame, The University of Western Australia, University of Tasmania and The University of Adelaide.
Both groups were used as the project reference group as detailed in Table 1.1 below.

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Table 1.1 Project Reference Group

Most researchers on the project team were former and current members of the ASPERA Executive Committee. The majority of other participants in the project were all representatives of ASPERA member-institutions. The wider ASPERA community were kept abreast of the progress of this study.

1.2 Key Terms and Definitions

ASPERA: Australian Screen Production Education and Research Association (ASPERA) is the peak discipline body of Australian tertiary institutions teaching and researching film, video, television and new media as screen-based production practices.

ASPERA member-institutions: Membership of ASPERA is defined by its member-institutions. The membership of ASPERA has fluctuated over the years and has included 18 member universities plus the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS).

Film School: In this publication the term film school is defined by the ASPERA membership requirements. The term does not include AFTRS, which is formally not a university, although AFTRS has been a special member of ASPERA since its inception in 2004.

NBN: In Australia there is a specific scheme called the National Broadband Network (NBN). In this study NBN is used as a general term for any Internet network scheme that delivers a viable national Internet connection.
**Screen production**: This is defined as a continuous and linear collection of images and sounds organised according to some narrative or intention, in any genre (fiction/ non-fiction, drama, documentary) and on either film or digital media format. Quite often this term is used synonymously with terms: “creative work”, “film” and “image-based text”.

**Screen producer/filmmaker/image-maker/ creative artist**: These terms are used in an interchangeable fashion according to the context.

**Screen Production Sector**: This term is used to describe all universities and academic units that have screen production researchers. Some years ago this number would have been similar to the membership of the ASPERA. However the sector has changed and 8 institutions that had not been ASPERA members at any time appear in the ERA 2010 and ERA 2012 audits, for the Field of Research (FoR) code 1902 Film, Television and Digital Media category. The two ERA audits suggest that the total number of institutions in the screen production sector could be as high as 30. However, some of these non-ASPERA institutions were primarily concerned with conventional text-based output.

**Notes and References 1**

1. The film industry is small and precarious see Dingle, S., Australian film industry in crisis, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Broadcast: 31/01/2011, <www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2011/s3126201.htm>
2. See ASPERA website <www.aspera.org.au>
3. For ERA 2010 and 2012 see <www.arc.gov.au/era/>
2. Rationale and Context

2.1 Historical Context

2.1.1 The Emergence of Postgraduate Research Programs in Screen Production.

PhD programs in screen production are comparatively new in Australia. Prior to the year 2000, these programs were rare and were usually identified under a different program label. In the late 1990s, the strong growth of undergraduate screen production programs made the development of postgraduate research programs inevitable. In 2001, these expectations received an additional boost when the Australian Research Council (ARC) recognized creative arts, including screen production, as a legitimate research category. At that time there were only a handful of filmmakers in Australia with PhDs qualification and the emerging research programs were hampered somewhat by the lack of suitable supervisors. It would be some years before these research programs would develop in earnest.

The one exception was Murdoch University, which in 2000 had three active filmmakers with PhD qualifications. Murdoch’s postgraduate research program was quickly embraced by some of WA’s best filmmakers as well Murdoch’s best honours students. In only a few years Murdoch’s postgraduate program grew to have around 20 PhD candidates. An important feature of the program was the presence of academic staff from the other four Western Australian universities. This cross-university postgraduate engagement became a platform for sharing the common experiences of working with limited resources in labour intensive, group intensive and infrastructure intensive programs while negotiating the ambiguous status of image-based scholarship within academia. The shared experiences of these Western Australian academics also gave rise to a highly committed group of collaborators who identified themselves as the WA Inter-campus Screen Academy (ISA) Research Group. In 2005 the National Academy of Screen and Sound (NASS) Research Centre was formally constituted at Murdoch University from the membership of the earlier ISA Research Group. The Centre became the first screen production research centre in Australia and has since contributed to the creation of a new generation of research leaders in Western Australia. In 2005 the NASS Research centre gave rise to the refereed e-journal IM: Interactive Media, which addressed some of the obstacles encountered by the screen production sector. Some of these matters were also addressed by ASPERA – the peak discipline body for screen producers, established in 2004. Members of ASPERA were active in formulating the new research landscape for screen producers in Australia, including topic such as:

- What is screen production research?
- What is screen production research output?
- How is screen production research measured (qualitatively or quantitatively)?
- How do screen production research outputs compare to text-based research outputs such as books, book chapters, refereed journals article, etc.?

The period gave rise to a number of proclamations that documented the complexity of screen production practice. Documenting such complexity was also the purpose of the 2008 ALTC-funded Priority project Assessing Graduate Output in Nineteen Australian Film Schools. All of the abovementioned publications inform the theoretical underpinning of this report – a number of extracts are included in the body of the text.

This was an optimistic period for the screen producers, and with the self-evident growth of image-based technology throughout the world, their optimism grew. In time, however, it became clear that development of a screen production postgraduate program would not be without problems. The difficulties that the group in Western Australian encountered during this period, and the glass ceilings that the staff and the postgraduate students came across, became the primary dynamo of the present project.
2.1.2 From Group Activity to Conventional Scholarship

The activities of film schools generally involve groups of students producing creative works. The production groups are initially small, to begin with, as are their production budgets. Both gradually increase as students progress to second and third year. When students enter the honours program, however, the whole supportive group structure and infrastructure evaporates and the students revert to conventional individual programs with individual dissertations. This is not catastrophic at the honours level as the needs of students are still quite modest. However, the problem becomes acute when honours students enter the postgraduate research program. At the time when the students’ aspirations are at their highest, when the funds and the crew support they require are substantial, the support they need disappears. Instead of working with a professional crew, postgraduates have little choice but to work within the conventional humanities scholarship paradigm designed for sole authors.

2.1.3 Problem of Production Funds

The support funds available to research postgraduates are very modest, usually about $2500 for the duration of their candidature. In contrast, potential funds available from state and federal funding bodies to “emerging filmmakers” could be as much as $150,000. Thus, at the completion of an Honours program, the best screen production students have an unenviable choice of either going on to do a PhD with minimal support or to abandon their studies and be potentially funded by as much as $150,000.

2.1.4 Double Dipping

An obvious solution for this dilemma was for academia to collaborate with the screen industry and make postgraduates eligible for industry-based production funds. However, state and federal funding bodies have always resisted the idea of students receiving these “non-educational” funds. They considered this to be an example of inappropriate “double dipping” of non-educational funds by educational institutions – even when the students in question were research students.

Individual universities could do little about this situation. Almost every university in Australia that has a screen production program has attempted to engage creatively with state and federal film funding agencies, without much success. This was true even when administrators of these funding agencies saw value in such engagement. It is highly unlikely that the situation will change greatly in the foreseeable future.

2.1.5 New Research Paradigm

Even if the industry funding was available to screen production postgraduates this would not solve the postgraduate funding problem. The engagement with the existing industry could, at best, benefit only a small group of students, because the industry support is likely to be offered only to projects that have a high market potential. For the remaining postgraduates, and especially those who aspire to go beyond the existing industry paradigm, the industry funding is not a viable option. Consequently for the majority of postgraduates it is necessary to find solutions within the existing postgraduate framework. This gives rise to a range of new problems.

2.1.6 Problems with the Conventional Postgraduate Research Paradigm

The conventional humanities research paradigm presents a major challenge for screen production postgraduates. Instead of the candidate working with a group of practice-based specialists and authors, he or she is constrained to work as a sole author with multiple tasks and with multiple crew responsibilities – the very antithesis of what most group-based screen producers aspire to do.
In this context each producer finds himself or herself having to learn and undertake new tasks – not once but often many times over. This type of postgraduate research is ephemeral, arising and disappearing with each project. Most of these solitary practice-based researchers see themselves as competing with the successful Hollywood industry and they continually compare their own work against prevailing Hollywood fashions. As a result, one often finds ever more fanciful narratives that do not ring true to local audiences. Consequently many of these projects remain as unrealized abstractions, worked and reworked within the writer’s private space, aspiring for an outcome that rarely eventuates in what is already a very challenged industry.

Murdoch University postgraduates encountered all of these problems. Although most aspired to be active practice-based researchers the lack of funds forced many to revert to conventional PhD thesis with scriptwriting being the most favourite alternative option.

After the initial postgraduate pool was processed the flow of new postgraduates slowed appreciably as the prospective students came to understand the internal contradictions of the research program that had minimal funding and resources.

2.1.7 Academic Status

As a consequence of these funding limitations, screen production research programs risk remaining small and being sidelined as costly academic oddities, rather than as programs with innovative research methodologies and great potential.

These circumstances present screen production research programs with a dramatic option: either the screen production researchers need to find a different way of doing research or they need to resign themselves to stagnation.

2.1.8 Staff-driven, Grant-driven Postgraduate Paradigm

Screen production is not the only discipline that requires substantial funds for its postgraduate research program. Science programs have faced the same problems, and yet have fared quite well. Hence a research model that works for science should also work for screen producers. Science research programs are generally staff-driven and grant-driven and served by a number of Chief Investigators (CI) on an ongoing basis. In this paradigm of scholarship the postgraduate researchers are invited to apply to be on the project team and are selected according to their suitability. They come to the project because they are already interested in it and do not have to invent the research project afresh.

The current project sets out to explore this kind of research paradigm for screen producers in an attempt to find a solution for their funding problems.

Notes and References 2

1. NASS website address: <nass.murdoch.edu.au/>
2. Website of Interactive Media: IM <wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/nass/nass_im_ejournal.htm>
3. Some of these interventions included: Petkovic, J, Broderick, M., De Reuck, J. “From the Editors” IM: Interactive Media refereed e-journal <wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/nass/nass_im_from_the_editors.htm>
Petkovic, J., “From the home of IM”, IM: Interactive Media refereed e-journal <wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/nass/nass_im_from_the_editors.htm>
Petkovic, J., Australian Screen Production research Index (ASPRI), Australian Screen Production Education and Research Association AGM Conference, UTS Sydney, June 2005, <wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/nass/nass_news_aspri.htm>
4. See Assessing Graduate Screen Production Outputs in Nineteen Australian Film Schools website: <wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/nass/altc/projectone/news.html>
3. Approaches and Dissemination

This project concerns itself with the long-term systemic change and capacity building in the university screen production postgraduate research education. The project leader initially presented a range of strategies for building postgraduate research in the sector. The process of engaging with the sector, and the responses of its members, are the principal outcomes of the project.

3.1 Collaboration

Collaboration was the overarching core principle that guided the evolution of this project. Feedback was sought on all issues until consensus was achieved. This collaboration process consisted of four interrelated activities:

- Mobilizing the sector
- Increasing awareness of the issues and consciousness raising
- Committing to a program of action
- Consolidating the collaboration program

These collegial activities are documented below.

3.2 Mobilizing the Sector

3.2.1 The First Consultation

The project formally commenced on 3 October 2011. Significant progress in mobilizing the sector was achieved shortly afterwards, in November 2011, through personal visits by the project leader to each partner institutions. These visits also included meeting with:

- relevant staff from Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS)
- local ASPERA executive committee members – representing the reference group for this project.
- colleagues from the University of Canberra, ACT to ensure their representation in the project
- significant screen production institutions and staff that were not included in the ASPERA membership but have screen production postgraduates.

3.3 Awareness of Issues and Consciousness Raising

3.3.1 The New Paradigm

These first meetings addressed the conditions required for developing a viable postgraduate research education in the screen production sector. The sector had been considering this matter for some time, if only because of the difficulties in funding the existing postgraduate research programs. However much of the thinking about the future of research in the sector have been by individual researchers and had taken place in isolation. A major task of the project was to dissolve this intellectual isolation and to bring these solitary researchers together to work on a dynamic, innovative and sector-wide agenda.
3.3.2 Grant-driven Postgraduate Paradigm

The meetings considered the need to go beyond the “longer film production” paradigm of postgraduate research and specifically the need for the screen production sector to explore the solutions that scientists have developed for their own postgraduate research students, namely research programs that are staff-driven and grant-driven. In this paradigm of scholarship the postgraduate researchers are invited to apply to be on the project team.

A strategy of this kind would have been unthinkable in the creative arts sector some years ago. However, with advances in cyber-technology this type of staff-driven and grant-driven research approach is not only possible but, arguably, inevitable as well as industry compatible as suggested below.

3.3.3 National Broadband Network (NBN)

Many of the early project discussions invoked the importance of the emerging NBN scheme to the screen production sector. There was a general consensus that NBN was an ideal medium for university screen producers as it opened up opportunities to both staff and students – opportunities that did not exist previously. These early discussions also involved brainstorming the future potential of the NBN. One such research possibility, already signalled in the initial project application, was the notion of cyber-trails and cyber-trail hubs.

3.3.4 Knowledge Trails Methodology

Screen production research has generally consisted of highly mobile groups, often working on a range of locations, and producing significant narratives for these locations while engaging with local participants, industry and culture. Many of these narratives would evaporate quickly after the production was completed, as would the research associated with these narrative journeys. Following the establishment of the Internet things became markedly different. Almost everything is now recorded and stored electronically. Narrative “journeys” that were once considered to be abstract and ephemeral can now be made permanent as narrative “tracks” or “trails” on some real or virtual landscape or a map. When stored as an archive in cyberspace these cyber trails can be augmented and layered as a complex matrix of data. Google and You Tube search engines provide two commercial examples of such narrative trails. The engagement with abstract maps of this kind can become the foundation for future “diagrammatic” development of screen production. For example the project leader has had a long-standing interest in developing a 350 km trail along the Ningaloo coast as marked out by the 1875 Stefano shipwreck survivors.

This hyper-textual type of trail is potentially attractive to many postgraduate researchers as it is conducive to many forms of narrative expressions including: Indigenous (Dreamtime), historical, social, cultural, experiential, environmental, biological, zoological, meteorological, geographical and topological narratives to name a few.

Each region in Australia has a range of powerful narratives that are considered important by local, national or international audiences. These narratives are in many genres: colonial, contemporary, indigenous, festive, cross-cultural and urban, to name a few. Many of these can be found in museums and art galleries often as static and sterile exhibitions. Many can be made into stunning mixed media exhibitions and mixed media trails. FORM’s Canning stock route which contains paintings, sculptures, installations, digital recordings, photographs, performances, explanatory texts, books and other publications is a good case in point:
Illustration 3.1 Co-curators with Canning Stock Route collection in Perth

Such trails can be an open platform for a variety of ongoing creative outputs that are useful to local communities, that regenerate local knowledge, while preserving important stories and memories that have grass-roots appeal. Engaging with such projects need not be all that different from engaging with screen production projects that begin with a scripting exercise. This type of trail methodology does not exclude the production of high quality visual narratives. In this perspective, the trail merely documents and records the type of research that generally goes into a major production. The trail documentation can be considered as a prelude to the actual film production and can be conceived as the preproduction stage of a major film production.

There are many regional stories that can be addressed collaboratively as if they were a filmic narrative. With screen production’s intrinsic interdisciplinary approach and group work, and with the sector’s extensive community contacts, it is ideally placed to do this type of work with postgraduates, undergraduates and TAFE students – or a combination of all three. If the screen producers do not engage with this type of activity quickly other disciplines are likely to do so. The sector needs to show leadership on this at the national level and speak with commitment, confidence and passion.

3.3.5 Screen production and Research Collaboration (SPARC)

The concept of collaborative networks became the preferred paradigm for the project and it gave rise to the most popular acronym for its activities, namely, Screen Production and Research Collaboration (SPARC), which was deemed preferable to the long title of Developing a Collaborative National Postgraduate Research Education Program for 22 Australian Films Schools. Project partners were asked to establish autonomous albeit collaborating State SPARC identities (e.g. SPARC WA, SA, VIC, NSW and QLD) and appoint group leaders to coordinate state SPACR activities. This was done with the understanding that the state hubs could in time be connected to NBN and with one another as depicted schematically in Figure 3.1.
What the project also needed was to formulate a well-funded scheme that could use this type of network linkage and at the same time act as an incubator for postgraduate research projects. The Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) scheme was an ideal template for such a purpose.\(^4\)

### 3.3.6 Cooperative Research Centre (CRC)

The early discussions on the NBN were quite optimistic about its potential for the sector. The optimism included the possibility of making a sector-based CRC bid related to the NBN some time in the future.

This optimism was underpinned, in part, by the special research profile of the sector as a whole. On the one hand, the sector was considered as an emerging research entity only recognized by the ARC in 2001. On the other hand, there was nothing emerging about screen production research. The medium was more than 100 years old and its influence on world culture had been and continues to be profound. Many academics working in the sector were acclaimed filmmakers with international credits and reputations. It was only the belated recognition of the sector’s research by the ARC regulators that made it seem “emerging”.

In these circumstances, if the sector could find an important CRC topic it could potentially argue for the sector-based CRC as a special case. The large number of institutions, staff and students in the sector, as well as the importance of screen production to the contemporary culture, all supported this position. The Department for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR) itself was interested in this kind of intervention as evidence by their 2011 publication *Research Skills for an Innovative Future: A research workforce strategy to cover the decade to 2020 and beyond.*\(^5\)

It was understood by all partners that mounting a CRC bid some time in the future was an appropriate aspiration for the sector, even after the completion of this project.

### 3.3.7 NASS Research Centre Template

From the outset of the project the National Academy of Screen and Sound (NASS) Research Centre website provided the platform for the project’s activities.\(^6\) The NASS platform also made it possible for participants to think of themselves as belonging to a collaborative research centre that could in time organize itself into a CRC entity. To distinguish the SPARC group’s activity from the activity of NASS, the provisional centre was labelled as the SPARC Centre on the website. Subsequently, most activities initiated by the project were identified as SPARC activities.
3.3.8 Collaborative Interuniversity Research Centre – SPARC Centre

One important task for the interim research centre was to collectively identify and mentor future research leaders, node coordinators and state hub directors as a way of servicing postgraduate researchers with projects, supervisors and funding. Another long-term objective of the centre was to develop effective mechanisms for identifying, developing, disseminating and embedding good individual and institutional postgraduate research practices in screen production.

3.3.9 CRC Requirements

Each SPARC group spent some time discussing the CRC requirements according to the existing specification of the CRC scheme:

"To deliver significant economic, environmental and social benefits to Australia by supporting end-user driven research partnerships between publicly funded researchers and end-users to address clearly articulated, major challenges that require medium to long-term collaborative efforts."

Accordingly, the state SPARC groups were invited to consider national priorities that the sector could engage with and seek projects with the following CRC-like specifications:

- Collaborative project with networks, hubs, nodes, knowledge trails
- Big Idea – grand idea – important idea – original idea
- Useful idea (local, national and international)
- Narrative-based
- Dramatic and dynamic narrative
- Recordable in images and other media platforms,
- Data-based, archive-based and cyber-based
- Additive and ongoing
- Hyper-textual
- Interactive
- Grant-based
- Staff-led
- Centre-based
- With postgraduate (and post-doctoral) places.

3.3.10 Young and Well CRC

Each SPARC meeting considered the details of the Young and Well CRC: Exploring the role of technologies in improving young people’s mental health and wellbeing. This CRC project was perceived as having particular relevance to the screen production sector and as a possible template for the sector’s own CRC bid:

In mid-2010 the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education announced a cash investment of $27m towards the establishment of a Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre led by the Inspire Foundation. This CRC will unite young people with researchers, practitioners and innovators from over 70 organisations from across the not-for-profit, academic, government and corporate sectors to conduct research which helps us better understand how technologies can be used to ensure that all young Australians are safe, happy and resilient.
The federal government’s investment, combined with close to $7m cash contributed by our 63 partners and over $80m of in-kind support, will resource:

the first consolidated Australian data on young people’s technology use, available through an online knowledge hub for researchers, policy-makers and the community;

an education and training program for over 350 leaders in youth, technology, cyber safety, mental health and wellbeing;

proven online services and tools used by young people and professionals for cyber safety, mental health and wellbeing, available through an Online Wellbeing Centre;

and research that supports parents, the community and professionals to respond to the cyber safety and mental health needs of young people.

Notes and References 3

1. Useful text in this context is Wood, D., *Rethinking the Power of Maps*, The Guilford Press, 2010
3. The website for *Yiwarra Kuju* The Canning Stock Route can be found at: <www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/yiwarra_kuju/home>
The enclosed photograph can be found at: <www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/yiwarra_kuju/the_story/defining_the_collection>
4. CRC website is at: <www.crc.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>
4. Program Of Action

4.1 State workshops

An important reason for the first consultation visits by the project leader was to arrange a Program of Action for the partner institutions and other project participants. Accordingly, state coordinators in each state were invited to arrange a series of structured workshops under the SPARC umbrella to explore the “new” postgraduate research paradigm. Consistent with the long-term CRC aspirations, the workshops organizers were asked to consider projects that were staff-led and grant-based and that were framed by some national priority of the kind that could be used to mount a CRC bid. The project partners, other participants and state coordinators were also asked to look for projects that:

(i) engaged with some important global topic and addressed some important local question
(ii) constructively engaged some local partners or community
(iii) produced grant applications that included some postgraduate research places.

These emerging ideas were to be developed and presented at each State SPARC Colloquium to be held in mid-2012.

4.1.1 Hubs, Nodes and Knowledge Trails

The overarching aim of the Program of Action was to establish a synergistic network of research projects in each state, and then organize these organically into research hubs with local, regional, national as well as international connections. At the end of the project, a number of viable collaborative projects were expected to have been identified, from the intermeshing and intersecting SPARC ideas. These research networks, in turn, were expected to provide platforms for linking local research activity with global scholars and audiences in a way that had great pedagogic, cultural and economic potential – collaborative e-learning being a good example of such linking.

4.1.2 ARC Position Paper

Another important task to be undertaken by the project was to examine the ARC grants application guidelines for the FoR 1902 Film, Television and Digital Media category to determine if these grant rules were appropriate for the sector. For example, fictional works are common to staff and postgraduate researchers and to the screen industry. However, fictional works are generally not supported by the ARC grants. Why not? Clearly the sector needed a position paper that argued for a more flexible assessment of screen production grant applications by ARC.

4.1.3 Website

The project website played an important integrative role for the project team by providing state-based groups with overviews, news and key documents at: <wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/nass/altc/index.html>

Because the site was imbedded within the NASS Research Centre website the project participants had easy access to the earlier ALTC project information and to the IM: Interactive Media refereed e-journal content relevant to the project.

4.1.4 Timeline and Schedule

For the project to succeed it was critical that all partners and participants thoroughly
Developing a Collaborative National Postgraduate Research Program for 22 Australian Film Schools

The project manager also had regular contact with the state coordinators about matters such as ethics applications, partner payments and agreements.
4.2 National Cultural Policy Discussion Paper Submission

In the late 2011, the National Cultural Policy Discussion Paper was launched by the Honorable Minister for the Arts, Mr Simon Crean, MP, and responses were invited from interested parties. The project leader prepared a submission on behalf of the project group. This submission entitled “University–Industry Links” was then distributed to all SPARC groups to stimulate sector-wide discussion on postgraduate research issues. The submission paper was subsequently published on the National Cultural Policy website in June 2012.1

4.3 SPARC Survey

This project began with a number of assumptions about the screen production research sector, especially regarding the difficulties of finding funds to support postgraduate research education programs. These assumptions needed to be tested. Accordingly, the first collaborative task undertaken by the project consisted of gathering data on postgraduate research in the screen production sector. This was done using a simple survey, which broadly speaking, sought to find out:

(i) the type of research undertaken by participating institutions;
(ii) the level of research activity for both staff and postgraduate research students;
(iii) the funding sources that underpin these research activities; and
(iv) the potential for collaboration among the institutions that often do different things – some competitive and some complementary.

Only one response was invited from each collaborating institution. The invitation was usually extended to the institutional research leaders, deans or research directors. Opportunity was given to survey participants to edit their responses as they gathered additional information.

This scoping survey did not require complicated analysis as the 17 responses from 22 film schools was statistically small enough to be self-evident. Often the absence of responses (absence of grants, postgraduates and practice-based research projects) was the significant factor in this survey.

The final SPARC Survey results and associated comments are presented in Appendix A. As a broad generality, the survey confirmed all of the presuppositions on which the project was based. These could be summarised as follows:

- Only 35 per cent of F/T academic staff in the sector had PhD qualification.
- About 40 per cent of F/T academic staff are upgrading their qualifications – 30% to PhD and 10 per cent to MA (research).
- The program content of the sector as a whole is quite uniform and based on traditional screen production activities
- The amount of research activity by staff and postgraduates in the screen production sector is mostly modest except for a number of exceptions.
- The number of current HDR students in the sector is mostly modest, except for a number of exceptions.
- The number of HDR completions in the sector for the last three years is mostly modest except for a number of exceptions.
- The number of Fellowships requested by the sector was very small (6) and yet a smaller number (2) were received – these in only one institution.
- The number of external research grants in the sector for the last three years was mostly small, except for a number of exceptions.
• The number of internal research grants hosted by the sector for the last three years was mostly small, except for a number of exceptions.
• The number of ARC Linkage grants hosted by the sector was small, except for a small number of exceptions.
• The total number of research grants in the sector was small, except for a small number of exceptions.
• Most staff in the sector considered that the funding support for postgraduates research was insufficient.
• Despite of these funding difficulties most survey participants were positive about the quality of their research.

4.4 The Second Consultation visit April to May 2012

The preliminary SPARC survey results, consisting of what was essentially raw data, were first presented to the Western Australia SPARC Colloquium with delegates from 5 local universities in attendance: Murdoch University, The University of Notre Dame, Curtin University, The University of Western Australia and Edith Cowan University. The Western Australian SPARC Colloquium template, depicted in Illustration 4.2, was then communicated to other state SPARC groups to assist them in hosting their own gatherings.

Illustration 4.2 Western Australian SPARC Colloquium Agenda template

SCREEN PRODUCTION AND RESEARCH COLLABORATION (SPARC):
Developing a Collaborative National Postgraduate Research Program for 22 Australian Film Schools

Western Australian SPARC Colloquium
4th April 2012

Time: 9:45 a.m.
Venue: NASSS Office
Room 4.077 Education and Humanities building, Murdoch University
NASSS office is next to Room 4.078 in the following map
http://maps.murdoch.edu.au/

PROGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>9:45</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Research &amp; postgraduate survey data</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
<td>Coffee and discussion</td>
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<td>11:30</td>
<td>Open discussion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Problems and Solutions based on survey data</td>
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<td>12:00</td>
<td>Collaborative Space</td>
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<td>A short presentation on the CRC or similar scheme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ingrid Richardson</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30</td>
<td>Lunch at Club Murdoch</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A presentation of criteria for research collaboration</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>Brainstorming</td>
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<td>Collaborative projects and grant applications</td>
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<td>3:30</td>
<td>Coffee and discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>Selection</td>
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<td>Institutional, state and national grant application</td>
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<td>leaders</td>
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<td>(from nominations in the SPARC survey)</td>
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<td>State and national delegations to industry and funding</td>
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<td>organizations</td>
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<td>4:30</td>
<td>End</td>
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This early survey information was then used by the project leader to brief all project partners during his second consultation visit in the early 2012 (April–May). These gatherings consisted of small groups of 5 to 15 researchers in each state and included the academics who provided the survey information. The project leader introduced all these meetings with a PowerPoint summary of the project’s rationale and aims. The presentation was then followed by an open discussion in which all collaborating participants had an opportunity to interpret the data from their own institutional perspective and according to the three aims of the research survey.

These discussion elicited participants’ views on other programs of action, including the:

- desirability of state-based and nation-wide collaboration
- best strategies for funding such collaboration
- best project format to attract such collaborative funding
- best researchers to lead such projects within each state and nationally

All participants in these discussions had the same status, although the state coordinators were responsible for hosting the respective state gatherings. During the second consultation visit the project leader also established contact with key discipline academics in each state, including heads of departments and discipline research coordinators.

4.5 State SPARC Colloquiums

The five state SPARC groups became instrumental in the launching of the local SPARC activities, engaging research staff from other institutions, brainstorming possibilities and developing a sense of a collaborative screen production research community.

4.5.1 Convergence

Media convergence was a frequent topic of discussion in the SPARC meetings with participants attempting to foresee the consequences of such convergence for the sector. These explorations were often presented in the workshop with the following propositions:

The emergence of a high quality National Broadband Network (NBN) will bring about a paradigm shift in the way we work, communicate and learn. The existing forms of communication will be eroded and reshaped. The boundaries that presently exist around a number of institutions and organizations such as museums, libraries, galleries, cinemas, archives and television broadcasters will dissolve. This convergence process will privilege digital cyber production, e-education and collaborative research networks.

Question: What new institutions will arise from this media convergence?

Question: How and where will the screen production researchers fit in this new future?

4.5.2 Diagrams and Schemes

Consultation workshops often made use of diagrammatic schemas to facilitate discussion. For example media convergence was depicted schematically in the diagram below.
Figure 4.1 The projected convergent network scheme

The following Figure 4.2 schematic SPARC “solution” was offered to participants for discussion.

Figure 4.2 The projected SPARC convergence network scheme

These diagrammatic schemes provided a concrete platform for discussing questions such as:

- What will happen to educational institutions in the e-future?
- Will the dominance of cyber world present problems to real humans?

4.5.3 SPARC Centres

The SPARC participants were acutely aware of the possibility that cyberspace could also be a place of isolation and disengagement from society. These discussions gave rise to the
futuristic notion of SPARC Centres. To take a sample, it was considered that SPARC Centres will be:

- community centres where actuality + cyberspace complement one another
- places of festive gatherings
- cultural-shopping-centres with broadcast and screening capacity
- places where learning, teaching and research can be integrated with the activities of the local population

Federation Square in Melbourne, which hosts the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI), was considered to have some of these futuristic features. A number of Victorian institutions saw merit in increasing links with ACMI.

4.5.4 National Priorities

The SPARC groups considered the range of national priorities established by the ARC – namely the Australian National Research Priorities – and focused on those that were relevant to screen production. These are listed below.

PROMOTING AND MAINTAINING GOOD HEALTH

Promoting good health and well being for all Australians

2. Ageing well, ageing productively
Developing better social, medical and population health strategies to improve the mental and physical capacities of ageing people.

4. Strengthening Australia’s social and economic fabric
Understanding and strengthening key elements of Australia’s social and economic fabric to help families and individuals live healthy, productive, and fulfilling lives.

FRONTIER TECHNOLOGIES FOR BUILDING AND TRANSFORMING AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRIES

Stimulating the growth of world-class Australian industries using innovative technologies developed from cutting-edge research

4. Smart information use
Improved data management for existing and new business applications and creative applications for digital technologies (examples include e-finance, interactive systems, multi-platform media, creative industries, digital media creative design, content generation and imaging).

5. Promoting an innovation culture and economy
Maximizing Australia’s creative and technological capability by understanding the factors conducive to innovation and its acceptance.

SAFEGUARDING AUSTRALIA

Safeguarding Australia from terrorism, crime, invasive diseases and pests, strengthening our understanding of Australia’s place in the region and the world, and securing our infrastructure, particularly with respect to our digital systems

2. Understanding our region and the world
Enhancing Australia’s capacity to interpret and engage with its regional and global environment through a greater understanding of languages, societies, politics and cultures.

The issues most often raised in the context of the above priorities related to:

- democratization of education and knowledge
- a sense of belonging: inclusion and cohesion
The SPARC meetings also began to develop collaborative staff-led and grant-led projects with postgraduate places. This was an on-going task with each SPARC group continuing to meet in each state as required. The immediate aim of these meetings was to decide what projects should be developed further using the $4000 seeding fund allocations.

4.5.5 Seed Funding of $4000

Notes and References 4


5. Seeding SPARC Projects

5.1 WA SPARC Project Selection

The first projects were selected for development in Western Australia in June 2012. At this meeting the Western Australian SPARC group identified the Indian Ocean as an area of research interest. This research agenda dovetailed neatly into a number of existing research projects including the establishment of the East Africa Film Commission, long-standing directorship of Zanzibar International Film Festival (ZIFF), existing collaborative projects in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia, postgraduate research projects in Cambodia and Tanzania, an ARC Discovery grant on Rottnest Island, Lotterywest Ningaloo (Stefano), Trail project, along with many other research projects already underway as indicated schematically in Figure 5.1.

![Figure 5.1 Schematic depiction of some WA SPARC group projects in the Indian Ocean region](image)

The focus of the WA SPARC group was, in part, inspired by the activities of Murdoch University Asian Research Centre, which also had strong ties with the Indian Ocean countries. The focus on the Indian Ocean region was conceptualized as a cyber-extension of other collaborative links that were being developed by various state SPARC groups as depicted in Figure 5.2.
5.1.1 Creative Arts and Cultural Diplomacy

The WA SPARC group found it easy to reconfigure the earlier discussions on the National Priorities and apply these to the international context in the Indian Ocean region. The following National Priority was signalled out as being the most relevant:

SAFEGUARDING AUSTRALIA

Safeguarding Australia from terrorism, crime, invasive diseases and pests, strengthening our understanding of Australia’s place in the region and the world, and securing our infrastructure, particularly with respect to our digital systems

2. Understanding our region and the world

Enhancing Australia’s capacity to interpret and engage with its regional and global environment through a greater understanding of languages, societies, politics and cultures.

The issues that were most often raised in the meeting related to:

- global democratization of education (or lack of it),
- global democratization of knowledge (or lack of it),
- sense of belonging: multicultural inclusion and cohesion,
- cross-national cohesion and thus security,
- a way of dealing with local, regional and national trauma and conflict,
- strengthening of international well being,
Following these reflections the group sought research projects that combined creative arts practice with cultural diplomacy, as conveyed in the following:

Our long-term aim is to establish authentic cross-cultural links and cross-cultural exchanges between practice-based researchers working in the countries on the rim of Indian Ocean. Ideally we want movements of researches in all directions, giving rise to a web of connections and interconnections. The linkages we seek are similar to exchanges in commerce that have always taken place along Indian Ocean trade routes. But instead of trading with goods and materials we intend to trade, exchange and construct stories together for the benefit of all concerned. We see this as an essential step in developing good relations amongst all people and countries in the Indian Ocean region. (Indian Ocean SPARC Manifesto)

5.1.2 Ring of Conference-Festivals

The WA SPARC group took on board the earlier SPARC Centre projections and sought projects that gave rise to festive gatherings, cultural-shopping-centres where learning, teaching and research could all be integrated together with the local population. These reflections coalesced together into the concept of a “ring of conference-festivals” – events where creative arts and conference scholarship would mingle together with local festivities.

Our aim is to meet annually and share outcomes of our research practice in a conference-festival setting. If we do this at a different locality each year it will give rise to lasting bonds of collegiality as well as eager anticipation of our next gathering. (Indian Ocean SPARC Manifesto)

5.1.3 WA SPARC Seeded Projects

Three conference-festivals were provisionally scheduled:

(i) 2013 Conference-Festival: Zanzibar International Film Festival (ZIFF).
(ii) 2014 Conference-Festival in Malaysia:
(iii) 2015 Conference-Festival in Western Australia

The SPARC group decided to use the $4000 seeding funds to facilitate the establishment of the first two of these conference-festivals.

Specifically, $2,000 was made available to each of the two projects below:

(iv) The Zanzibar International Film Festival was considered to be an important springboard for developing Indian Ocean collaboration and for launching the Indian Ocean SPARC. $2000 was allocated for organizing a conference on postgraduate research in association with the ZIFF.

(v) $2000 was allocated for the preparation of the OLT Grant project application with Malaysian colleagues on the topic of international collaboration in screen, theatre and drama education. If successful this would provide the springboard for the 2014 conference-festival in Malaysia.

5.2 2012 ASPERA AGM Conference

The ASPERA AGM Conference was held at QUT, Brisbane, in July 2012. The Conference provided another opportunity for the project partners to consult one another and to hear the results of the WA SPARC deliberations. At that time the project leader also circulated a “Feedback and Brainstorming” document that summarized all issues raised by the project as
Developing a collaborative national postgraduate research program for 22 Australian film schools

5.3 Queensland SPARC Project Selection: Asia–Pacific

The Queensland SPARC was made up of representative from three Queensland universities: Griffith, QUT and Bond. This SPARC group responded quickly to the Indian Ocean network proposed by the WA SPARC group, by foreshadowing an equally organic research network in the Asia–Pacific region. For some years Queensland institutions have been working with partners in this region and it was viewed as natural that these links became the platform for the Queensland SPARC group activities. Some of these trans-Australian influences are evident in the September 2012 minutes of the Queensland SPARC group provided by Queensland state co-coordinator Nicholas Oughton and detailed below:

5.3.1 Queensland SPARC Minutes (extract): Designing the project

In order to establish a frame for the Queensland project, and to provide consistency with other SPARC State projects, our approach referenced the underpinning precepts that informed the recent WA SPARC meeting held in Perth. These precepts reflect the intent of the overarching SPARC project.

Some of the principles highlighted were:

- The importance of enhancing the integrity, efficacy, legitimacy and quality of screen production and practice based research methodology.
- A requirement to focus on postgraduate research
- The need to engage with communities and institutions in a regional context, for instance the Pacific region.
- To utilize online networks in order to engage speedily and economically with stakeholders within and without Australia.
- To develop grant-seeking strategies (CRC, AusAID) in order to facilitate further research through collaborations with Australian and overseas institutions and develop postgraduate scholarship opportunities.

With these principles in mind the group decided that a focus on the Pacific region would be appropriate and that indeed, this would complement the Indian Ocean purview of the WA SPARC group. The rationale behind this approach hinges on the following:

- Pre-existing training, educational and practice connections with the Pacific region, for instance, QUT and GFS have links with the Fijian Islands, and GFS has an association with the Asia–Pacific Screen Awards and Timor. Bond’s involvement includes hosting Pacific-based students in their Film Production programs.
- A perception that some Pacific nations may wish to garner assistance in developing their own screen education programs in order to more fully explore, discuss, promote, and disseminate their traditional and unfolding cultures, knowledge trails, and to develop commercial screen-based assets.
- A belief that established film schools can play a role in assisting emerging films schools develop educational programs and initiate a research agenda.
- Countries considered during the discussion were Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Guinea and Timor.

The discussion was informed by ideas enunciated in the paper, *Story Telling For The Asia–Pacific* by Dr. Margaret McVeigh. In this paper McVeigh asks the question, ‘what is the best way to understand and prepare emerging filmmakers in the Asia–Pacific cultural and industrial context?’ This question invites an examination of:
• The narratives and stories appropriate to the Pacific region.
• The influences that will impose themselves on these narratives including culture, narrative and filmic conventions, government and industry policy, emerging technologies, and community and national goals.
• The existing structures, facilities and skills-bases in the Pacific region.
• The formal educational structure and programs required to assist individual nations and communities to prepare and sustain their own practitioners.

Through membership of the Australian Screen Production, Education and Research Association (ASPERA), QUT, Bond and GFS are connected to CILECT, the International Association of Film and Television Schools (Centre International de Liaison des Ecoles de Cinéma et de Télévision), which is the world body representing film schools, and its Asia Pacific regional chapter – CILECT Asia–Pacific Association (CAPA). CAPA is planning to initiate a mentoring program between established and emerging film schools in the Asia–Pacific region.

There are two additional circumstances that will assist in propelling this project forward. First, a commitment given by Professor Richard Bagnal, DVC Research (GU) and Graham Wise, Manager Research and Development (GU) to provide assistance with this undertaking. Both attended the Queensland SPARC Colloquium conducted at Griffith Film School in April 2012. The second circumstance involves the CILECT Asia–Pacific Association (CAPA) Conference that will be held in Brisbane in late-November 2012. The two themes leading this conference are:

Film School Futures in the Asia–Pacific region.
What are the challenges facing emerging and established film schools of the Asia–Pacific in relationship to: digital systems, workflow, data management and storage; the decline of celluloid acquisition; the development of new discipline areas and technologies; and teaching practice relating to these topics?

New cooperation and partnerships between Film Schools in the Asia–Pacific.
What opportunities exist for new and more extensive partnerships between Asia–Pacific film schools including: inter-regional or cross-institutional co-productions; academic and student exchanges; joint offering of programs; and promoting screen education and cinema in the Asia–Pacific region?

Both themes provide a context for further discussion regarding the goals of this project.

In order to facilitate further investigation and discussion, the Qld, SPARC group proposes to bring representatives of Pacific Communities and higher education to the CAPA Conference. These include the Director of the Oceania Centre for Art, Culture and Pacific Studies at the University of the South Pacific Vilsoni Hereniko. Vilsoni is a filmmaker and wrote and directed the feature ‘The Land Has Eyes’, and has an intimate knowledge of the contexts informing this project.

The Qld SPARC team proposes, therefore, to allocate a portion of the $4000 grant to bringing Vilsoni Hereniko to Brisbane for the CAPA Conference (if he is available) and to have discussions with him during this visit.

5.4 Victorian SPARC Project Selection

The Victorian SPARC group consisted of academics from four universities: VCA/ Melbourne, RMIT, Deakin and Swinburne. Selecting the SPARC projects for development in Victoria became a most interesting exercise as it brought out the problem between the old and the new paradigm of screen production in a stark fashion. For a very long time Melbourne was the cradle of the best that Australian filmmaking had to offer. This high reputation was
reflected in the reputation of the local tertiary institutions. For many years, their output was compared favourably with that of the Australian Film, Television and Radio School which operated on a much more generous budget. Similarly, many Victorian academics had a proud record of achievement at the world’s best film festivals.

Not surprisingly, many of these busy filmmakers did not have PhD qualifications – fewer so than the screen producers in other states. The subsequent emergence of postgraduate PhD programs placed these filmmakers at a great disadvantage within the university system that expected them to have such qualifications. One Victorian institution did not have a single staff member with a PhD qualification and other institutions did not fare much better. Many staff members in Victoria were attempting to upgrade their qualification on a part-time basis (somewhat bemused by the system that expected them to affirm their filmmaking by getting qualifications that impeded their filmmaking).

Under the circumstances it was difficult for these filmmakers to think beyond their immediate situation in the SPARC meetings. Without PhD qualifications their ability to apply for grants was greatly curtailed. Nor was it surprising to find that the relationship between the academia and the industry became the focus of their deliberations.

The minutes of Victoria SPARC meeting, compiled by Dr Leo Berkeley, outline the following plan for action:

- hire a research assistant to interview all the academics involved, to capture our postgraduate and research activities and aspirations, and ascertain how to develop them further;
- identify and collate relevant documents;
- armed with this information, hold a meeting, inviting some select industry people to participate as well;
- the meeting would come up with an agreed approach and the research assistant would capture the discussions and outcomes in a report.

5.5 NSW SPARC Project Selection

The situation in New South Wales was opposite to that in Victoria. In NSW there was no shortage of filmmakers with PhD qualifications or institutions with ARC grants and PhD completions. One institution was rated 5 on the 2012 The Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) index of Excellence – the highest possible rating. This institution had a very large number of doctoral and MA (research) students. Similarly, the academic staff from the same institution had attracted many large ARC Discovery and Linkage grants. One academic from yet another NSW institution received the much-sought-after Discovery Grant to make a film. The other two state institutions also had substantial numbers of postgraduate students and were developing their own research programs with some success. Arguably these institutions did not need collaboration to improve their research performances.

In spite of all of these successes, these research-active academics still understood the precarious state of screen production funding and maintained solidarity with SPARC colleagues from other states.

To understand this attitude of solidarity it is informative to recall Q54 of the SPARC Survey which details the sector’s response to the availability of postgraduate funding. Only 6 per cent of participants in the survey considered these funds to be adequate. The question and the responses were as follows:

**Q54 Please indicate what you consider the level of funding for the practice-based postgraduates in your academic unit to be:**

(Select one only)
Developing a collaborative national postgraduate research program for 22 Australian film schools

Untenable for most practice-based projects 50.0 per cent
Insufficient but manageable with various restrictions 43.75 per cent
Adequate 6.25 per cent

5.5.1 Extract from NSW SPARC Meeting

The NSW SPARC was made up of screen production academics from COFA, UTS, UWS, MAQ and The University of Newcastle. The focus of this group can be gleaned from the extracts of SPARC meeting minutes provided by the NSW state coordinator Associate Professor Gillian Leahy.

First State Colloquium, 4th May, 2012

This day had a small attendance but was nevertheless useful. Dr Josko Petkovic outlined the SPARC project to Gillian Leahy and Susan Kerrigan. He also outlined the survey data results of the survey carried out as a part of the SPARC project into postgraduate research education (screen production) in Australian Universities. The idea of a CRC was put forward and what it might achieve for the screen teaching sector in universities. Mark Berlage from the UTS Research and Innovation Office (RIO) outlined the way CRCs could be set up and discussed various bids that UTS has put up for CRCs as examples.

Some time after this state colloquium a meeting of the NSW team was held at Gillian Leahy’s house. Present were Hart Cohen, Ross Harley, Susan Kerrigan, Maree Delofski and Gillian Leahy.

We decided that a useful project for NSW would to be to gather as many of the NSW academics supervising screen-based creative research or undertaking it, on one day at UTS for a symposium where we could frankly discuss the issues facing our sector. We would record and transcribe the discussion on that day and that text, with participants de-identified, would be for use by us for further research in the area.

Further details on this meeting are available at:

5.5.2 College of Fine Arts (COFA), The University of New South Wales

Screen practitioners from COFA NSW have produced cutting-edge research in screen production. The project leader met with Professor Ross Harley, Dean of COFA, in Sydney on three separate occasions, in order to benchmark with him some of the emerging SPARC proposals.

5.5.3 Macquarie University

Professor Kathryn Millard is a leading Australian academic filmmaker and theorist. She also has extensive links with the Screenwriting Research Network (SRN) - an international network of researchers in screenwriting:

The Screenwriting Research Network is a research group consisting of scholars, reflective practitioners and practice-based researchers interested in research on screenwriting. The aim is to rethink the screenplay in relation to its histories, theories, values and creative practices.

The network commenced in 2006 within the Louis Le Prince Research Centre, at the Institute of Communication Studies (ICS), University of Leeds. During the last six
years the network has grown rapidly. Yearly conferences have attracted a growing number of people around the world to share experiences and discuss problematics of screenwriting research. The conferences have taken place in Leeds (2008), Helsinki (2009), Copenhagen (2010), Brussels (2011), and Sydney, Australia (2012). The sixth conference in 2013 widens the geographic spread to North America, Madison, Wisconsin.2

In September 2012, Professor Millard together with Dr Alex Munt (UTS) hosted the SRN Words & Images Conference at UTS, Sydney. All SPARC groups would benefit from their contribution and from having links with SRN. The project leader maintained correspondence with Professor Millard throughout the project and met with her on two occasions in Sydney to ensure that she was kept abreast of all SPARC activities.

5.5.4 AFTRS/NSW SPARC

NSW is the home of AFTRS – the premier film school in Australia. AFTRS staff had participated in a number of ARC grants although the School itself is not formally classified as a university. A number of AFTRS staff expressed interest in the SPARC activities from the outset of the project. However these connections were lost after the two staff members liaising with the SPARC project left AFTRS. Some contacts were re-established through the NSW SPARC. These links will be documented elsewhere in this report.

5.6 University of Canberra, ACT

The University of Canberra in the Australian Capital Territory is a significant screen production institution but it did not belong to any state-based SPARC group. The project leader met Professor Greg Battye from the University of Canberra on four separate occasions in order to ensure that he and his staff were kept informed of all SPARC developments.

5.7 South Australian SPARC Project Selection

Flinders University was almost the only university in South Australia with screen production research programs although there was some screen production activity in the other two universities, namely University of South Australia and The University of Adelaide. In spite of this, all three institutions managed to get together around the following SPARC agenda detailed below (and provided by the SA state coordinator Dr Wotherspoon):

1. Brief discussion of possible research projects as circulated in an earlier email
2. Proposal by Dr Alison Wotherspoon for a research project that addressed the inappropriateness of the NHMRC ethics model for researchers in the creative arts and the humanities and the need for a more suitable ethics process to be developed
3. This idea was immediately agreed upon as one that was of interest and concern to all of us and would be a suitable project to pursue as the SPARC SA project.
4. Agreed to call the project Ethics and Creative Arts Research
5. The aim of the project will be to develop a pilot project that will aim to change national ethics guidelines to include more suitable ones that reflect the research undertaken in non-medical/health research and lead to an educational follow up for researchers nationally.
6. The initial SPARC funding will be used as the basis to develop a preliminary report after which it is envisaged that there will be a series of recommendations that can then be further developed and distributed through the SPARC network via a series of road shows
7. The SPARC pilot has the potential to develop into an OLT grant with SPARC as the lead network.

8. One outcome may be the development of a nationally recognised and standardised online ethics approval system with drop down menus for low risk research in the creative arts and humanities.

9. It was recognised that the amount of human resources spent on current ethics approval procedures is immense and will only grow in the future, as research is deemed increasingly crucial for university funding.

10. There was discussion and agreement that under the current guidelines a great deal of work is defined as practice and not identified as research by creative arts and humanities scholars due to the ethics approval process and mismatch of assumptions.

11. The current model assumes that human research should be anonymous, random and represent the collective whereas in the humanities and creative arts research is more likely to be based on individuals. As such there is still a commitment to minimize harm and protect the people we are working with but often our job is to give voice, document and share the stories of people who are not normally heard and to recognise them as the owners of their stories. It is therefore necessary for us to identify our participants, acknowledge them as the owners of particular knowledge, choose our research collaborators for particular reasons and rarely is it a random choice.

12. As a consequence of the NHMRC requirements many researchers in the creative arts are choosing to not apply for ethics approval as it seems irrelevant to their work and is often difficult to get ethics approval through within a reasonable period of time and in some cases before grant funding is withdrawn.

13. If instead we call our work professional practice it is not deemed to require ethics approval. This then raises the issue of much of the research being undertaken in the humanities and creative arts not being called research or recognised as such within the university.

14. This was raised by Alison Wotherspoon at a Creative Arts Learning and Teaching Symposium in Hobart held in February this year and she found that her concerns about ethics procedures in the creative arts are widely held in the creative arts academic sector.

15. This project proposes that some of existing protocols should be relaxed but the proposed ones would still provide clear guidelines and ethical obligations about informed consent, what is on the record, and be explicit. It is more a case of the balance of emphasis or lens through which research involving humans is viewed differently.

16. The example of a public music video project was discussed where participants gave informed consent, the filmmakers had a clear understanding of their ethical obligations and it would have been impossible to clear through the NHMRC model.

17. The proposed model would aim to become embedded into educational system of creative arts and humanities courses – from 1st year of degree it would be taught.

18. To make this happen, proposing to have a SA symposium and then develop model to pilot in SA.

19. Output would demonstrate track record in collaboration, and it would have impact and relevance as research.
Proposed Project

**Ethics and Creative Arts Research**

**Output**
- National guidelines review – gather guidelines from all Australian universities as well as international models that already have online ethics approvals – e.g. the Netherlands
- Draft report for circulation and final report for SPARC which becomes the basis for an OLT application in 2014
- Survey of current ethics requirements and application forms and processes

**ACTION**
- One page SPARC proposal of research project that this is our intention
- Ask for support from our respective institutional networks – Hawke Centre, JM Coetzee Centre for Creative Practice, Flinders Institute for Research in the Humanities
- Report becomes the brief for a research Assistant. (…)
- Hold symposium in Adelaide and as a result of the papers extend preliminary report and out of this will come actual report written for SPARC.

**Notes and References 5**

1. Asia Research Centre website: <wwwarc.murdoch.edu.au>
2. SRN website: <screenwritingresearch.com>
6. SPARC Projects

6.1 International Consultations:

With SPARC activity underway in Australia, the consultative process was extended to include a number of international collaborators in order to benchmark and critique some of the future SPARC plans.

6.1.1 FAMU, Prague:

The first international meeting was with Pavel Jech, Dean of the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts (FAMU), Prague, Czech Republic in early October 2012 and with Vit Jancek, chair of FAMU International. FAMU had hosted the CILECT Conference on the theme of *Exploring of Film Media Education* in the previous year. Accordingly discussions with FAMU staff were informed by these relevant and quite recent deliberations within the CILECT itself.1

The FAMU staff were aware of the research-based screen production programs on offer in the European Union universities – in Norway and Finland in particular – and had such programs on offer for the FAMU students as well. Generally they did not find much demand for these programs – most students were happy with the conventional film school pathway and with the MA as the terminal degree. Accordingly the staff were happy to maintain FAMU’s good reputation and its traditional film school profile. Nevertheless, they were monitoring developments within the European Union and were prepared to act if necessary.

6.1.2 Sony Centre, Berlin

The project leader made a brief detour to Berlin to visit the Berlin Film Museum in the Berlin’s Sony Centre. Like Federation Square in Melbourne, the Sony Centre complex provides a good template for the SPARC Centre concept discussed at a number of SPARC meetings. The Centre contains film and art museums, cinemas, conference halls, hotel rooms, offices, restaurants and condominiums. Visitors can connect to Wi-Fi and learn, research and teach at leisure. Subsequently the Sony-like architecture became a starting point for many discussions related to the convergent future of the sector and the functioning of the imagined SPARC Centres.

6.1.3 Westminster University and Goldsmith College, London:

In mid-October 2012 the project leader met two UK colleagues, namely Professor Joram ten Brink from Westminster University and Dr Tony Dowmunt from Goldsmith College, London. Both were instrumental in the formation of the UK Arts and Humanities Research network. Also, staff from both institutions participated in the earlier 2009 ALTC project *Assessing Graduate Output in 19 Australian Film Schools*.2 Both institutions provided a good role model for screen production postgraduate research.
6.1.4 The British Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC):

Westminster University, in particular, had been very successful in obtaining large grants from the British Research Council (BRC) to produce a number of memorable films set in the Indian Ocean region. One of these films, *The Act of Killing* was an outstanding success. This film serves as an excellent example of what can be achieved at the postgraduate and the postdoctoral research level. This film is described elsewhere in this report.3

The visit to Westminster University was also an opportunity for the project leader to invite Professor ten Brink, the Executive Producer of this film project, to participate in the National SPARC Colloquium in July 2013 and screen his film. The invitation was graciously accepted.

6.2 Face and Faciality Research

One area of screen production research that could be explored by the sector relates to our ability to recognize faces and to communicate with facial expressions. Facial expressiveness is the cornerstone of cinematic experience.4 Faces are the visible boundary between our interiority and exteriority and thus a fertile research area for modelling of our inner life, consciousness and the Mind itself.5 This research can be aided by advanced technology such as MRI scans, eye-movement scans, motion capture as well as devices that measure metabolic activity. All these devices can be mobilised to monitor how a particular viewer responds to a particular filmic text, thus illuminating the relationship between the film and the viewer’s states of consciousness.

On his return to Australia, the project leader had exploratory discussion on this topic with Professor Duane Varan of the Audience Laboratories, Murdoch University, Professor Ross Harley, Dean COFA; Professor Greg Battye, University of Canberra; and Associate Professor Ingrid Richardson of the Young and Well CRC. All were enthusiastic about the collaborative
potential of such a project. A short position paper invoked the following e-mail response from one of these colleagues:

This is totally amazing! Good work.

Many screen producers may find it difficult to enter into this demanding area of research at present. This, however, should not stop the sector from planning projects in the future in what is likely to be a vibrant area of screen production research.

6.3 Queensland SPARC Project: CILECT-CAPA Conference

In November 2012, the project leader attended the CAPA (CILECT) Conference in Brisbane. CAPA is the Asia-Pacific chapter of CILECT and the Conference was an opportunity to hear directly from CILECT delegates, including from the current CILECT President, Maria-Dora Mourau, Sao Paulo University, Brazil. The visit to Brisbane also provided an opportunity to meet many project partners again and exchange news on the most recent project developments. Above all it was an opportunity to see the Queensland SPARC group in action in what was a very impressive gathering of screen producers.

6.3.1 Professor Vilsoni Hereniko

Conference presenters at the CAPA Conference included Professor Visoni Hereniko, Hawaii University, whose visit was supported by the Queensland SPARC seed funding.

VILSONI HERENIKO is a playwright and stage director and seven of his plays have been produced and published. As a screenwriter, film director or producer, he has written and directed or produced five films, including a narrative feature, “The Land Has Eyes”, set on his homeland, Rotuman “Land” premiered at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival and has been shown at over 20 international film festivals, including Rotterdam, Montreal, Brisbane, Shanghai, Singapore and Moscow. Winner of several awards, including “Best Dramatic Feature” at the 2004 Toronto Imaginative Film and Media Arts Festival, “Land” was also Fiji’s official entry (2005) for the Academy Awards in the Foreign Language Film category. In addition, Vilsoni has served on the
film selection committee for the Hawaii International Film Festival as well as a jury member for several international film and theatre festivals. Vilsoni was the editor of the award-winning journal “The Contemporary Pacific” from 2002–2008. He has also authored or edited academic books or articles on Oceania.  

In his presentation Professor Hereniko noted that it was: “imperative to know more about the wisdom, sensibilities, values and aesthetics that are embedded in original and oral stories of Oceania. He added that this is a huge untapped resource, “an archive of knowledge and wisdom that would be worth exploring, particularly in the context of the young who are generally only watching Hollywood movies”. At the same Conference Dr Shushi Kathari (University of Auckland) further outlined the reasons for such a research project:

Apart from the Academy of Creative Media in University of Hawaii, there are no films schools in the Pacific Islands. There are also no dedicated screen production degrees, nor any structured courses that offer opportunities to learn film and video production. These are cultures rife with a long history of oral storytelling and performance, but their screen representation remains marginal.

6.3.2 Pacific Voices

The Queensland SPARC group and their Pacific partners intended to investigate this research project further with a scoping study entitled: Pacific Voices: Screen Industries and Culture in the Pacific. Subsequently this scoping study was presented at the National SPARC Colloquium held on the 6th – 7th July 2013 by Nicholas Oughton and Dr Margaret McVeigh. (see Appendix C)

The 2012 CAPA Conference in Brisbane was an impressive platform to launch the Queensland SPARC project. In the following months other SPARC projects were activated. These included:

6.4 The Submission of the OLT Project: e-Learning

The national SPARC collaboration gave rise to the OLT $220,000 grant application on collaborative e-learning. This project was initiated by Griffith University in collaboration with Murdoch University and entitled Making Curriculum Connections for the Asian Century: Griffith Film School’s eMasterclass Cross-Cultural Screen Development Program.

6.5 The Submission of the OLT Project: Cultural Exchange

The Western Australia SPARC collaboration gave rise to the OLT $220,000 grant application on the topic of international collaboration in screen, theatre and drama education. The application was prepared by Murdoch University and Curtin University and was entitled Cultural Exchange: Performance as a teaching and learning tool in an internationalised digital Environment

6.6 Ningaloo Trail: Mix-Funded Project

Another Western Australian SPARC project was the Heritage Trail proposal along the Ningaloo coastline. The proposed Trail will recreate in cyberspace and in situ the 350 km, six-month, journey undertaken by the barque Stefano castaways after their vessel became shipwrecked off Point Cloates in October 1875. Geographically, the Trail overlaps the World Heritage-listed Ningaloo coastline and this alone gives it great potential. In 2011, a Murdoch-based SPARC group applied for a $30,000 Trail Planning Grant from Lotterywest and was successful. The Trail planning stage was subsequently completed in the early 2013. The group is now ready to commence establishing of the Trail and is presently in the process of fundraising from the corporate sector for its construction. The proposed Trail has the
potential to become an incubator of many postgraduate research projects while at the same time establishing close engagement with the local communities. For this reason it is described in some detail below. At the time of writing this report one prospective PhD postgraduate had applied to work on the cyber version of this Trail project.

6.6.1 Barque Stefano Yinikurtira Trail (BSYT)

The proposed Trail is based on a shipwreck story that can easily be found in any feature film narrative. Of the 17 Stefano crew only two survived the ordeal. They did so by joining the local Yinikurtira Aborigines and living with them for 3 months until they were picked up on 18 April 1876 by Charles Tuckey in his cutter Jessie and brought to Fremantle.

![Illustration 6.3 The votive painting of the cutter Jessie picking up the two Stefano survivors from Bandigi Beach, North West Cape, on 18 April 1876](image)

Illustration 6.3 The votive painting of the cutter Jessie picking up the two Stefano survivors from Bandigi Beach, North West Cape, on 18 April 1876

Two months afterward, on 4 July 1876, the two survivors returned to the place of rescue (at Bandigi Beach, North West Cape) to thank their Indigenous benefactors and to deliver gifts from the colonial Governor of Western Australian. This occasion turned to be a most happy reunion of friends. The reconciliation spirit of this reunion underpins the theme of the Trail. The story is already celebrated by both indigenous and European readers.

6.6.2 Innovative Trail

The Trail will signpost this unique story with innovative signage like the sculpture-in-the-desert by the Chilian sculptor Mario Irarrázabal depicted in Illustration 6.4 below.
Illustration 6.4 Sculpture in the desert by Chilean sculptor Mario Irarrázabal

There is no end of creative research projects that can be established along the 350 km proposed Trail. The initial Trail will consist of:

1. A cyber trail: iPhone Aps with GPS trail guide
2. Innovative signage on the beach – 22 sculptures
3. A research centre for coastal habitat and nomadic cultures

Each one of these Trail features can be serviced by a number of postgraduate research projects for a very long time, and these projects can be expressed in many formats including image, text, music, sculpture and dance, to name a few – all of which can be recorded, documented, digitized and archived on the cyber-trail that can be accessed by global audiences. Creative projects of this kind will help bring international visitors to the BSY Trail and these, in turn, are expected to bring considerable cultural, educational and economic benefit to the region.

6.6.3 Indigenous Tourism

Indigenous Tourism is a sustainable and rapidly growing industry that gives Indigenous Australians a natural economic advantage while endorsing the Indigenous culture in a most innovative fashion. The Stefano shipwreck story will increase the Indigenous value of this region for visiting tourists and this is likely to translate into wide-ranging educational, employment and business opportunities.

6.6.4 Knowledge Tourism

Knowledge Tourism is a sustainable and rapidly growing industry. The BSY Trail will dovetail neatly into this growth and most likely facilitate its growth by digital technology and cyberspace networks.

6.6.5 Indian Ocean Project

The Trail will be a significant Indian Ocean project that addresses important cross-cultural issues that are the focus of the WA SPARC Indian Ocean group.

6.7 The NSW SPARC: Burning Questions Symposium

The Burning Questions: postgraduate research approaches to creative screen practice Symposium initiated by the NSW SPARC coordinator Associate Professor Gill Leahy took place on 19 June 2013. By all accounts the symposium went well. A number of data gathering research projects were suggested, including:

- An annotated bibliography of models and methodologies for creative screen
Developing a collaborative national postgraduate research program for 22 Australian film schools

- A compilation of PhD assessment criteria sent to examiners by various universities along with formal description of creative research PhDs.

At the time of writing this report the transcription of the above Symposium was ongoing. When completed this *Burning Question* document will make a valuable contribution to the sector. The summary of the Symposium discussions is provided in Appendix B.


6.8.1 Collaboration Theme

This conference was co-hosted by the NASS Research Centre (on behalf of the WA SPARC group) and the Zanzibar International Film Festival. The conference was held in Stone Town, Zanzibar on 28–30 June 2013, and had a theme that was similar to that of the National SPARC Colloquium held a week later.8

Illustration 6.5  ZIFF Poster on the World Heritage Listed Old Fort, Stone Town, Zanzibar
6.8.2 Special Conference Guests


Yet another significant participant at the Conference was Ms Joan Peters, who like Mira Nair, has also been involved with the training of African filmmakers. In addition to her African work, Ms Peters, had become a member of the Screen Australia Board – the principle funding body of the Australian screen industry.10 The Conference setting made it possible for the Conference participants to discuss with her the difficult issue of university–
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industry relationships in a most collegial of manner. This discussion was something that will be developed further in the future.

6.8.3 Indian Ocean SPARC: Cultural Diplomacy Manifesto

At the conclusion of the Conference all participants were invited to acclaim the following Cultural Diplomacy manifesto and to take it to their institutions:

We the undersigned wish to contribute to the scholarly collaboration in the Indian Ocean region.

Our long-term aim is to establish authentic cross-cultural links and cross-cultural exchanges between practice-based researchers working in the countries on the rim of Indian Ocean. Ideally we want movements of researchers in all directions, giving rise to a web of connections and interconnections. The linkages we seek are similar to exchanges in commerce that have always taken place along Indian Ocean trade routes. But instead of trading with goods and materials we intend to trade, exchange and construct stories together for the benefit of all concerned. We see this as an essential step in developing good relations amongst all people and countries in the Indian Ocean region.

Specifically we would like to affirm the following two elements of our collaborative research aspirations:

1. Scholarly Exchanges:
We anticipate vibrant scholarly exchanges of research staff, postdoctoral fellows and postgraduate research students and will encourage all our institutions to allocate at least one adjunct position for the visiting practice-based researchers working in the Indian Ocean region.

2. Ring of Festival-Conferences:
Our aim is to meet annually and share outcomes of our research practice in a conference-festival setting. If we do this at a different locality each year it will give rise to lasting bonds of collegiality as well as eager anticipation of our next gathering.

6.8.4 CILECT links

A few weeks after the Conference the WA SPARC organizers received the following e-mail response from our South African colleagues and Conference participant from AFDA:

Dear Colleagues

I discussed the proposal with our CEO and he is in favour of AFDA hosting the 2015 SPARC in Durban, in collaboration with the Durban international Film Festival (DIFF); if Murdoch wants to host it in 2014.

Our Chairman of the AFDA Board, Garth Holmes, is also chair of CARA, the African chapter of CILECT, and he would consider making a proposal for collaboration between our 2 CILECT chapters.

Who on your side can help us with preparing the inter-chapter CILECT discussions?

The Griffith Film School is the lynchpin for the Asian-Pacific chapter of CILECT as indicated in the earlier writing on the Brisbane CAPA Conference (see section 6.3). The potential link in the Indian Ocean region of CAPA and CARA chapters of CILECT, as suggested in the above e-mail, offers a good example of how SPARC links can quickly lead to additional networking and collegial connections.
Notes and References 6

1. CILECT FAMU Prague Conference website <www.cilect.org/posts/view/372>

2. See website Assessing Graduate Output in 19 Australian Film Schools: <wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/nass/altc/projectone/news.html>

3. The Act of Killing website: <theactofkilling.com/>

4. See Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F, A Thousand Plateaus, University of Minnesota Press, 1993

   Ekman, Paul; Emotions Revealed, New York, Henry Hold and Co. 2003


11. AFDA website: <http://www.afda.co.za>
7. Planning The National Research Centre

7.1 Collaborative Research Centre – Stage 1

The formation of a collaborative national research centre for screen producers was foreshadowed in the original application. The initial work on its establishment began on 11 February 2013 with the following e-mail (extract) from the project leader to all partners:

Our project is entering its final year. I hope that by the end of it, in October, we will have some substantial action in place that will continue the collaboration initiated by the project. Forming some kind of national collaborative research centre for the ASPERA sector – as outlined in the initial project application – is one way that we can continue to deliver collaborative outcomes in years to come.

I would now like us to start looking at the research centre options so that at the National SPARC Colloquium in July we can present something well-considered to our colleagues. This will take some work and some delicate diplomacy to assure everyone (and some of our more research advanced institutions in particular) that institutional collaboration is more productive for all of us, in the long run, than is outright institutional competition.

Personally I have no doubt that collaboration will be productive for the sector and is the best way forward for all – including our high flying institutions. For example, the two high-end grant schemes, CRC and ARC Centre of Excellence, are almost defined by institutional collaboration. Application for either of these two schemes will be greatly enhanced by collaboration of researchers in the sector, and greatly reduced by not having such institutional collaboration. Establishing an ongoing collaborative research centre will provide an excellent foundation for such future grant options and a win-win outcome for everyone.

We should note that in April ARC will be calling for EOI for its Centre of Excellence grant scheme. Some of our research-intensive institutions may make a bid for it. I think that it would be prudent for us to have an “Academy” of researchers from the ASPERA sector in place that could support such an initiative if it eventuates.

Process: Establishing a national research centre for screen producers is an institutional rather than an individual matter. Consequently, whatever we present to our colleagues in July Colloquium will need to be affirmed by respective institutional research coordinators, school and/ or faculty deans and ultimately all research managers (DVC Research) as well as the ASPERA Executive Committee.

I imagine we can do this as a two step procedure:

(a) We can initiate the process by some kind of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that is given to our respective heads of departments and/or departmental research coordinator and to ASPERA Executive Committee as soon as possible. Such a memorandum of understanding would outline:

- the need for the proposed collaborative research centre
- the aims of the centre
- the governance of the centre
- the functioning of the centre and associated costs
- the outputs of the centre
Some of the things that should go into this MOU would include:

- The Centre will be a community of ASPERA researchers working on collaborative projects and identified formally as a national research centre.
- The Centre will define itself primarily by research activities that institutions cannot do alone.
- In all circumstances the activities of the Centre will be a subset of normal institutional research activity. Accordingly it should be made clear at the outset that the proposed centre will not encroach on any individual and institutional research programs.
- The proposed national Centre should not be a simple forum for collaborative philosophical reflections, rather it should be set up with objectives that proactively seek collaborative projects and in this way strengthen and lobby for the sector and the ASPERA.
- Ideally the Centre should seek collaborative funding to support its research activities.
- Until major sources of funding are found for the running of the Centre, it may be prudent to run the centre as a pro-active community of ASPERA practice-based researchers working with a minimal business model and a minimal institutional cost – perhaps $2,000 in-kind support (such as teaching relief) for each institutional representative on the Centre. This kind of investment should be worthwhile to participating institutions.
- One way of facilitating the Centre’s communal activity is to celebrate the successes of its researchers with a designated research “Academy”. This proposal will dovetail neatly into another Creative Arts Learned Academy project presently underway (that involves ASPERA). I would suggest that whatever mechanism is used to select the membership of such an Academy, the same membership should elect and be in the governance of the proposed national research Centre.

If institutional managers and the ASPERA Executive are happy with such a MOU we can then commence signing off on it as soon as it is in place. We also need to accept the possibility that some institutions may wish to move ahead on their own without the sector’s support (AFTRS?) and others may wish to remain teach-only institutions.

(b) Once this is done we can then go on with the formal establishment of the research centre that, in time, can be signed off by respective DVC-Research.

ACTION: If this broadly sounds fine to you I will start writing the first MOU draft and will then get back to you for feedback and contributions until we are all happy.

7.2 Stage 2 – Australian Screen Academy (ASA) Research Centre

The first draft of the Memorandum of Understanding for a Collaborative National Research Centre was produced on 12 April 2013 as indicated with the following e-mail from the project leader to partners:

SPARC Colleagues

I have now drafted a document to formalize the collaborative research centre as prescribed in the initial project application. This attached document consists of two parts:
(i) a broad draft “manifesto” for deans that outlines the need for such a collaborative centre.
(ii) draft MOU – for signing by deans

The questions that we should now collectively address are:

- Are the set aims for the proposed Centre sufficient to ensure that it will be proactive, successful and will advance (postgraduate) research in the ASPERA sector?
- Will the governance of the Centre, outlined in the document, deliver on the set aims for the Centre?
- Will the relationship between the proposed Centre and its contributing institutions work?
- Is the relationship described in the document between ASPERA and the Centre sufficiently integrated – in time this will need to be a 2-way discussion with ASPERA?

As prospective mothers and fathers of this ambitious undertaking your guidance and contributions on the proposed Centre are eagerly sought.

Let me have your contributions by COB Friday 27 April (two weeks) when I will collate and integrate all our positions. We can then engage with the ASPERA Executive before we engage with the rest of our ASPERA reference group (colleagues).

Two days ago a colleague of ours suggested a working title for the proposed Centre which I think is simple, elegant and efficient – Australian Screen Academy.

To ensure that this working title is viable for our discussions I checked its availability on the ASIC website last night. Surprisingly it was available and I have now formally registered the name. Other names still remain as options. Let me know which you prefer.

Best wishes.

After incorporating the feedback from partners the final version of ASA MoU was ready on 1 May.

A copy of ASA MoU was sent to ASPERA Executive on 13 May 2013. The same version was subsequently presented to the National SPARC Colloquium on 7 July 2013. It is enclosed in the second section of this report and is also available online at: <www.mcc.murdoch.edu.au/nass/altc/projecttwo/doc/MoU_for_creation_of_ASA_Research_Centre.pdf>
8. 2013 National SPARC Colloquium

The National SPARC Colloquium, held at VCA, Melbourne, on 6–7 July, was the culmination of research-related brainstorming activities associated with this project. The Colloquium program brought together screen production research staff from around the country.1

8.1 Colloquium Reference Group

The Colloquium participants were significant academics and heads of departments from 15 ASPERA member institutions. These institutional leaders represented all the reference group institutions that were registered as research active in the 2012 ERA audit, and included the following institutional representatives:

1. Associate Professor Hart Cohen UWS NSW
2. Professor Ross Harley COFA/UNSW NSW
3. Professor Julian Knowles MAQ NSW
4. Dr Susan Kerrigan UN NSW
5. Associate Professor Gill Leahy UTS NSW
6. Professor Su Baker VCA/MEL VIC
7. Dr Leo Berkeley RMIT VIC
8. John Cummings DEA VIC
9. Associate Professor Mick Broderick MU WA
10. Dr George Karpathakis ECU WA
11. Howard Worth CU WA
12. Professor Herman von Eyken GFTVS/GU QLD
13. Dr Sean Maher QUT QLD
14. Professor Greg Battye UC ACT
15. Dr Alison Wotherspoon FLIN SA

The other significant national participants were:

Professor Ian Lang, The University of Melbourne
Dr Margaret McVeigh, Griffith University
Ms Nicolette Freeman, Head of VCA Film and TV School
Mr Nicholas Oughton, Griffith Film School
Ms Annabelle Murphy, VCA Film and TV School
Associate Professor Josko Petkovic, project leader, Murdoch University

The first presentations, at the Colloquium, were by significant academics who were or had been research coordinators, heads of schools and deans. These presenters included Nicolette Freeman, Professor Su Baker (VCA), Professor Ross Harley (COFA), Professor Greg Bettye (UC) and Professor Ian Lang (Melbourne). Some of these presentations will be published in the IM: Interactive Media refereed e-journal towards the end of 2013.

8.2 SPARC Survey Presentation

The project leader presented a substantial extract from the SPARC Survey, which was discussed in section 4.3 and is included in more detail in Appendix A. Perhaps the most illuminating survey result is to be found in the following Survey question:
Q8 Is the overall academic emphasis of your academic unit is:
(tick one only)

Predominantly on undergraduate teaching (more than 70%) 59 per cent

Mixture of undergraduate and postgraduate coursework teaching and research 41 per cent

Predominantly on postgraduate coursework (more than 70%) 0 per cent

Postgraduate coursework and research 0 per cent

The responses to this question gave a good indication of the research profile of the screen production sector. They suggest that 59 per cent of institutions with screen production programs were essentially teach-only academic programs – probably with individual researchers working within them. They also suggest that 41 per cent of screen production institutions had a more substantial research program.

These responses are supported by responses in Figure 8.1, which summarizes the number of postgraduate researchers in the 17 institutions.

![Figure 8.1 Full time postgraduates PhD (blue), DCA (red), MA (green) for 17 universities](image)

This chart combines responses from three survey questions (29, 30 and 31) and combines the numbers of full-time postgraduates in PhD, DCA and MA(research) programs. The 17 universities in the survey had 146 F/T research postgraduates in total, made up of 64 PhD (blue), 17 DCA (red) and 63 MA (research) (green) postgraduates. The distribution of these postgraduates was very uneven with most research postgraduates in the institutions number 2. Many institutions had only a few and some had no F/T postgraduate research students.
8.3 International Connection: E-learning

In April 2013, the colloquium organizers had to overcome the late withdrawal of the UK presenter, Professor Joram ten Brink. His replacement was Professor Jon Rubin, Director of the SUNY Centre for Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) – a unit of the State University of New York’s Office of Global Affairs. Professor Rubin also directed the National Endowment for the Humanities funded COIL Institute for Globally Networked Learning in the Humanities, which had engaged 22 U.S. and 25 international universities in developing collaborative, shared, networked classrooms. He also developed a Cross-Cultural Video course in which SUNY students co-produced videos over the Internet with students in Turkey, Lithuania, Mexico, Belarus, and Germany. His own films had been shown at the Museum of Modern Art and at the Whitney Museum in NY. He was best known for his Floating Cinema, a choreography of media images moving across the water at night. He had received Guggenheim, National Endowment for the Arts, Ford Foundation and Fulbright fellowships.

Professor Rubin’s presentation was entitled:

*Cloud-based exchanges with international partners – building distant media collaborations for aesthetic and intercultural engagement and mutual professional development. An overview with examples of extended student media co-productions and formats of institutional linkage.*

Prior to his Colloquium presentation Professor Rubin had already established connections with Queensland SPARC and with Professor Herman van Eyken in particular.

His talk on e-learning added to the theme that was beginning to take shape in the OLT grant application on e-learning by Griffith Film School (in collaboration with Murdoch University). E-learning was also something that was of interest to Professor Ian Lang, from The University of Melbourne (see Appendix B) and it could well become a collaborative project for the sector as a whole.

8.4 Young and Well CRC: Case Study

Professor Rubin’s presentation was followed by a three-member panel presentation on the Young and Well CRC mentioned earlier in section 3.3.10.3

The presenters included Associate Professor Ingrid Richardson, one of the CRC’s Principal CIs. She was joined on the panel by her two postgraduates, Jess Strider and Sam Cross, thus providing an excellent example of the staff-led, grant-based new paradigm of research at work. The panel provided an overview of Program Two: *Connected and Creative*, which focused on how existing and emerging communication technologies can help to enable the good mental health of young people who are vulnerable or marginalised. Using innovative and mixed methodologies, and via a range of ‘digital interventions’, the Program aimed to better understand the benefits and risks of young people’s creative online practices, including social networking, collaborative storytelling, multiplayer gaming, mobile media use, and digital content creation and sharing.

8.5 State SPARC Reports

On the second day of the Colloquium there were five presentations from the state SPARC coordinators, in the following order:

- QLD SPARC: Nick Oughton and Margaret McVeigh (see Appendix C)
- WA SPARC: Associate Professor Josko Petkovic
- VIC SPARC: Dr Leo Berkeley (see Appendix D)
The reports described the respective state SPARC research projects outlined earlier. All reports indicated a heightened state of awareness of research matters and foreshadowed the potential that existed in the national collaboration. The potential of networking can best be depicted schematically by Figure 8.2.

**Figure 8.2 The potential national and international SPARC network scheme**

### 8.6 ASA Memorandum of Understanding

The State SPARC Reports were followed by discussion on the formation of the Australian Screen Academy Research Centre. The circulated MoU document arose from wide consultations. Every academic leader contacted was enthusiastic about the formation of ASA and the affirmation of the document at the National SPARC Colloquium seemed as it would be a mere formality. Building on the previous network scheme, the ASA MoU proposed a network depicted in Figure 8.3.
Developing a collaborative national postgraduate research program for 22 Australian film schools

A number of responses to the ASA MoU proposal are enclosed below:

Great work.

For wide decanal support, I suggest the ASA (an excellent choice of name) be used primarily as high credibility research validation and impact measurement unit for 1902 specific works.

The ASA may then through listing scholars, become a list of eminent reviewers that funding government organisations, employers, and journals can use elected membership of as a simple proxy for scholarly eminence.

The ASA could offer coveted endorsement of selected 1902 journals and publishers. Proxy publisher endorsement by the ASA should provide much greater publication opportunities for active screen practitioner-researchers and demonstrably lift ERA and impact scores amongst cooperating school members.

The ASA should be clearly defined as a research and researchers-only academy, whose mission may complement ASPERA’s much wider remit, but remain at arms’ length from ASPERA’s legitimately political peak body lobbying function.

The ASA rather than ASPERA may be the best housing place for potential 1902 Research Higher Degree scholars and debate, and natural cross-membership vehicle
for international members and equivalent foreign learned societies. This should increase masters and PhD completions considerably in the sector, and make each Chair of Examiners job at each school much more efficient. It is possible that ASA should consider a standing committee of Chairs of Examiners to advise the organisation and interested bodies such as Universities Australia as well as government.

Lastly and playfully, the allusion of ASA to film speed could be captured by allocating various speeds to the organisations projects. ASA 3000 and above for things that need to happen fast for moving targets. ASA 50 for core traditional activities.

A great initiative.

A response from another head of school was short but to the point:

I think you have it all right here.
I am 200% with you on this.

Yet another response was:

Amazing document. Well done. ...(...)... I propose to do a track changes on this by the deadline you’ve given in part to try and remove any ’loaded’ terms.

But incredible work. What a hero.

8.7 ASA Memorandum of Understanding Presentation

The ASA MoU document was presented for consideration at the end of the Colloquium program. The presentation was expected to start the long process of formally establishing the ASA. The Colloquium provided an ideal opportunity for the sector to commence this process with a general affirmation of the ASA MoU. All was set for a straightforward process following the long consultation period with partner institutions. Furthermore, the sector was already acting as a collaborating entity and engaging with research development very much as prescribed by the MoU document. The energy that the project brought to the Colloquium was in itself an affirmation of the ASA proposal.

Having discussed various aspect of the ASA MoU during the previous year, and with limited time available at the Colloquium, the project leader proceeded directly to the proposal. He briefly reiterated the potential that ASA held for the sector and invited the sector to, in principle, affirm the establishment of ASA. He also suggested that ASA could be launched immediately and with some fanfare by forming the most impressive interim Executive Committee that the sector could muster. He suggested that such a Committee should consist of individuals with proven research record and in principle include the following:

- A Professor from ERA 5-rated institution
- Two Professors from two established film schools
- The President of ASPERA (from ERA 4-rated institution)
- A Research Coordinator from WA (at Associate Professor level)
- Plus one more unspecified member to be determined by the ASA Executive.

He noted that as the mentor of the project he did not want to be considered for the membership of the above Committee.

Curiously, the response from a group of about four representatives was much more complex than the expected enthusiasm and for this reason is worth noting here.

- One participant was quite definite that some institutions were not ready to join any research gathering, as they were not research ready.
• One participant suggested that the nominal $2000 dollars of the in-kind support proposed by the ASA document could be spent helping those in ASPERA that were not research active become so.

Subsequently it transpired that some of these delegates had not consulted their deans regarding the ASA MoU document.

• One delegate indicated that she did not dare to consult her dean as he was a scientist and would not be receptive to the ASA MoU. She was also asked by her research leader not to engage with ASPERA activities any more but to focus on other (funded) research activities.

• Another indicated that her departmental dean wished to develop Creative Arts and not the ASPERA-based research entity.

• There was an implied call for sympathy for delegates that were threatened in such a way and an implied call for them to be supported by the ASPERA community.

• One participant expressed the fear that approving the ASA MoU would lead some institutions to move forward faster with research development while others would be left behind.

• One participant thought that in these circumstances ASA could diminish ASPERA by competition, as the ASA Executive would be taking important research decisions and not the ASPERA Executive.

These responses gave rise to a kind of a split in the project group. The delegates who were enthusiastic about the establishment of ASA choose not to counter those who felt they were not research ready to join it. The discussion on the ASA MoU was deferred to ASPERA AGM Conference for feedback where the same group of 4 delegates led the discussion. This deferral was unfortunate as 7 significant research leaders who attended the Colloquium left Melbourne and did not attend the ASPERA AGM Conference that followed.

8.8 ASPERA Feedback

The feedback from the ASPERA AGM was similarly muted about ASA, as it was at the intervention at the SPARC Colloquium: the AGM meeting decided to establish a sub-committee to further consider research and research collaboration in the ASPERA sector. The research sub-committee was the first active research sub-committee established by ASPERA in many years and this in itself should be considered an excellent outcome of the project.

As a feedback on the ASA proposal the ASPERA AGM deliberations were of limited value given that many significant research leaders were absent from the meeting.

The AGM outcome also generated some interesting e-mail communication from a number of institutional leaders who supported the affirmation of ASA. So much so that it became quite clear that there were differences between the leaders of ASPERA institutions and their ASPERA representatives. This was unfortunate as it brings into question the status and effectiveness of ASPERA. It is something that ASPERA will need to address if it is to re-engage fully with the sector.
8.9 ASA: The Next Stage

According to the SPARC survey, about half of the screen production sector seems to be research-challenged and large sections of it could be pushed into teach-only mode. The ASA Research Centre was formulated to deal with the problems of the sector and to do so in a way that supports the ASPERA community while giving it a vibrant research impetus and direction.

The collaborative activities initiated by this project demonstrated in concrete terms what ASA could do and how it could function. These activities had successfully engaged everyone in the sector, including those who considered themselves not to be ready for such engagement. For all these reasons the collaborative program implemented by this project needs to continue with staff and institutions that support its establishment.

The wider problems that the sector faces and the strategy to deal with these are the subject of the next section of this report.

Notes and References 8

2. Jon Rubin website: <coil.suny.edu/home>
PART B

9. Developing a Collaborative National Postgraduate Research Education Program for 22 Australian Film Schools: A National Strategic Plan

9.1 Introducing the Six Strategies

This is the second part of the two-part report on Developing A Collaborative National Postgraduate Research Education Program for 22 Australian Film Schools project. The first Part, sub-headed Towards a National Strategy, outlined a range of research projects that were explored by the project team. Many of these projects were based on the science paradigm of postgraduate research (staff-based, grant-based), even though this research paradigm is not commonly found in the creative arts sector at present. Such staff-based and grant-based postgraduate projects will arise from the sector only if it develops a healthy research culture. A culture of this kind requires a constellation of supporting elements, including adequate funding, a critical mass of researchers, positive links with industry, a well-defined research focus, as well as the recognition of the sector’s research output by relevant institutions and organizations.

The primary aim of the second part of this report is to identify factors that impede the development of a vibrant research culture in the university screen production sector and to identify strategies for addressing these obstacles. Six such strategies are described below along with relevant recommendations. These are offered here as A National Strategic Plan for sustainable postgraduate research development in the university screen production sector. The six strategies are:

STRATEGY 1: PROPER RECOGNITION OF THE ARC FoR 1902 CATEGORY FILM, TELEVISION AND DIGITAL MEDIA
The Australian Research Council is the primary funding body for university-based research activities. If the university screen production sector is to be funded properly, it needs to ensure that its relationship with ARC rests on sound foundations and that the sector’s research is properly recognized and assessed.

STRATEGY 2: DEFINING THE LIMITS OF THE DISCIPLINE
The proliferation of images in the world today makes it easy to forget what the screen production sector stands for. Conceivably screen production could become anything that contains images, in which case there is a risk that the discipline itself will become diffused. If the sector is to prosper it will need well-defined parameters and a relevant focus for its research activities.

STRATEGY 3: DEVELOPING RESEARCH–INDUSTRY LINKS
The sector needs to have good connections with the screen industry and this industry’s funding organizations. Screen production research programs should account for both: the industry-based programs as well as the innovative programs. It also needs to actively facilitate synergies between the two programs.

STRATEGY 4: ORGANIZING THE SECTOR
Developing a collaborative national postgraduate research education for screen producers potentially has many educational, cultural and commercial benefits. Forging a national collaborative research
Developing a collaborative national postgraduate research program for 22 Australian film schools

centre, with the aim of proactively seeking collaborative projects, will greatly benefit the sector.

STRATEGY 5: ENHANCING THE PEAK DISCIPLINE BODY
In recent years ASPERA has developed some admirable and worthy characteristics of inclusiveness and the sense of a scholarly community within the screen production sector. However, these attributes have come at the cost of ASPERA’s disengagement from institution leaders within the sector and the discontinuation of its subcommittees.

STRATEGY 6: DOCUMENTING THE SECTOR’S RESEARCH OUTPUT
For the screen production sector to be properly recognized as a research discipline, it needs to properly document its research output and have that output properly recognized by the university research regulators. The solution already exists, but needs to be implemented.
10. Strategy 1: Proper Recognition of the FoR 1902 Category – Film, Television and Digital Media

The SPARC Survey undertaken by this project suggests that the university screen producers are quite consistent in the way they view their scholarly practice. It is, however, questionable if the university research managers understand what this scholarly practice is or if it represents a valid type of research. This lack of understanding is best evidenced by the ARC’s belated recognition of the discipline in 2001 under the Field of Research code of 4103 Cinema, Electronic Arts and Multimedia (and subsequently under FoR code 1902 Film, Television and Digital Media). In the same year the national Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC) attempted to measure the output of the discipline only to give it up as being too difficult – further indicating a certain lack of clarity about the screen production discipline and its research output.

The best way to demonstrate this lack of discipline clarity is to ask the following question:

How many screen production works have been made with ARC-funded grants since the recognition of the creative arts as an autonomous research category in 2001?

A more dramatic version of the same question is:

How many fictional screen production works have been made with ARC-funded grants since the recognition of the creative arts as an autonomous research category in 2001?

Yet another version of the same question is:

How many fictional scripts have been completed with ARC-funded grants since the recognition of the creative arts as an autonomous research category in 2001?

Each one of these questions invites us to address what is, broadly speaking, the dominant output of the existing screen production research programs for both postgraduates and research staff. These questions also invoke the dominant form of the film industry output, which is mostly fiction-based. Given the cultural and the economic importance of this industry, and given that it also reflects the research activities of postgraduates and research staff, one would expect that fictional research projects would be supported by ARC-funded grants.

A list of ARC Discovery grants given out to FoR 1902 category, Film, Television and Digital Media (aka 4103 Cinema, Electronic Arts and Multimedia), since the recognition of the creative arts research category in 2001, is documented in Appendix F. With only a few notable exceptions, there are no self-evident screen production works, fictional or otherwise and there are no script-projects among these grants. The absence of these common screen production outputs from the list of ARC-funded projects is rather odd. It suggests that ARC does not recognize the dominant form of screen production practice as having any connection with research. Whatever the explanation, this absence of ARC grants should be interrogated formally if the screen production sector is to be established on firm scholarly foundations.

10.1 The Emergence of Creative Arts as a Research Category

When the Australian Research Council recognized creative arts as an autonomous research category in 2001 it is likely they did so with much goodwill towards the emerging discipline, but with limited foresight. For example, one of the ARC funding guidelines included the following qualification:
ARC Discovery Projects does **NOT** support the following work: ...

6.5.1b. activities leading solely to the creation or performance of a work of art, including visual art, musical compositions, drama, dance, designs and literary works, for which Commonwealth Government support is provided through the Australia Council for the Arts.3

Implicit in this guideline was the proposition that art-practice was not scholarly research but something else. Although something called creative arts research did exist, this research was quite different from the art practice funded by the Australian Council for the Arts. Sentiments of this kind were quite common within academia at that time: art practice was considered to be something subjective and sensual and quite different from the detached and objective scholarly research.

As a result of these sentiments the “artists” recruited by academia to service the growing screen production programs, were considered to be appendages to the real academia and to the real researchers. This sub-class designation of creative arts gave rise to a situation in which even acclaimed filmmakers, with international awards, were employed at the lowest level of appointment – mostly as tutors and lecturers in media, culture, communication and creative arts programs. Low-level appointments are not all that unusual for emerging disciplines. However, screen production research was not a new or emerging discipline. The only emerging aspect of screen production was its belated recognition by the ARC – whatever that meant.

During those early days of the discipline’s “emergence”, it was self-evident that careers of screen production “artists” would not improve unless they completed a 100,000 word PhD thesis – as expected of all reputable academics. Getting visual artists to stop their art and become writers was never likely. Consequently screen production academics became captives of the established academia that knew a lot about “research” and what to do with their research-challenged artistic colleagues, but little about creative practice.

Curiously this perverse situation had a symmetrical counter-position. Many creative artists held equally partisan, albeit inverse, view of academia. From their perspective, the professorial commentators on screen production were “armchair” filmmakers who should be kept away from all creative practice. This was often expressed with the slogan that “academia is antithetical to art”. Another passionate rejection of conventional scholarship could be found in the proclamation that the MA degree is the appropriate terminal degree for creative artist. The proponent of this position could readily point to the Australian Film Television and Radio School, the premier national school, for support. The highest degree offered by AFTRS was and still is MA by coursework. One could go further afield to CILECT – the international association of film schools – and find a very similar position. Most institutions in this association endorse the MA as the appropriate end degree for filmmakers.

The differences between professorial commentators and disgruntled filmmakers within academia could not be sustained for long once the two began to work together. Nor could these be sustained in the world in which images were becoming ever more important. Research related to images was a natural site where the rapprochement between the two groups began to take place. Established professors found it convenient to recruit creative arts colleagues to their research projects. The inclusion of creative partners as Early Career Researchers (ECR) bolstered the chance of getting grants in the yet unchartered territory of creative arts practice, which was becoming a fashionable scholarly undertaking. Seemingly overnight, the “craft” ignored for over a century found champions to speak on its behalf under the labels of creative practice, creative industries, practice-based research and similar such brands.

In practical terms this type of collaborative arrangement was presented to creative arts academics along the following lines:
To become a (real) researcher you have to play the game according to the ARC research rules that are now in place.

First you need to get some “runs on board” by joining ARC projects as an ECR.

For this to happen, appropriate national priorities that are fashionable and have currency need to be selected as areas of research.

You can then also publish (with us) – creatively – by filming what ARC researchers do and say about “your” type of research.

Needless to say the professorial commentators knew how to write in a scholarly fashion and how to apply for grants. They were also good at identifying prescribed national priorities that suited their scholarship, even if such scholarship was generally at odds with the aims of creative arts academics. The professors, through their seniority, were also well placed on the ARC College of Experts and could thus facilitate the project that best suited their specific and limited appreciation of creative arts practice.

With hindsight it is doubtful that this relationship was ever very productive for creative arts academics. The most amicable arrangement for such an odd and uneven research collaboration was one in which the two partners had little in common, namely scholarly professors who did not know much about creative arts practice and creative practitioners who had little time for scholarship. This was not a relationship of experienced mentors grooming the emerging scholars. Rather it was a marriage of convenience that generally never went beyond this convenience. Professors remained professorial and practitioners remained ignorantly useful. In the end, this situation only perpetuated the division between the two strands of academia without helping either.

What this relationship did do was to define the research output produced by ARC-funded grant projects in the last 12 years for the Film, Television and Digital Media FoR 1902 category (and the earlier 4103). Although grant projects in this category had some of the most creative academics in Australia participating in them, it is still questionable whether or not these projects gave rise to creative works or something else that had little to do with creative works.

10.2 ARC Discovery Grants

A close scrutiny of the ARC Discovery Grants for the last 12 years suggests that with only a few notable exceptions, screen producers did not receive any grants for recognizable creative works in the 1902 category (see Appendix F). None of these ARC grant outcomes were acclaimed as creative works. Rather, the grants were given to projects with national priorities determined by creative arts commentators, technologists, statisticians and software programmers. These outcomes may be considered as appropriate national priorities by some researchers. However, from the point of view of creative “artists” the so-called recognition of the creative arts research category was and still is an empty slogan.

With hindsight one could also conclude that the relationship between the two strands of academia never matured into a real partnership or a true collaboration. No awards, clamour of acclaim followed. When considered from this perspective it is possible to argue that the ARC grants allocated to the FoR 1902 category for the last 12 years have created a desert for screen production scholarship. It can also be argued the absence of support for creative works has extinguished a generation of creative arts scholars.

10.3 Scholarly Collaborators and Research Grants

Who were screen production collaborators in the past years? The SPARC Survey indicates that these were mostly from Media, Communication and Culture. This is also supported by the data from the new Emerging Discipline: Multi-Disciplinary Research defined in the ERA2012 as follows:
Multi-disciplinary research relates to, or involves, two or more academic disciplines that are usually considered distinct. Knowledge flows between disciplines have attracted interest because advances in science often involve collaboration across discipline boundaries.

Table 10.1 shows the multi-disciplinary flow between two-digit FoR 19 Studies in Creative Arts and Writing research category (which contains 1902 Film, Television and Digital Media) and a range of other two-digit Fields of Research (FoR) codes. The percentages in the FoR 19 column indicate the extent of collaboration with other two-digit FoR codes. For example, the primary collaborators of FoR 19 Studies in Creative Arts and Writing are Language, Communication and Culture (47%), along with Education (17%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fields of Research</th>
<th>19 Studies in Creative Arts and Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multi-disciplinary research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of apportioned output</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Language, Communication and Culture</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Education</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Built Environment and Design</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Studies in Human Society</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 History and Archaeology</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08 Information and Computing Sciences</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Philosophy and Religious Studies</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Psychology and Cognitive Sciences</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Commerce, Management, Tourism Services</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Medical and Health Sciences</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Law and Legal Studies</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05 Environmental Sciences</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02 Physical Sciences</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06 Biological Sciences</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Technology</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01 Mathematical Sciences</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03 Chemical Sciences</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04 Earth Sciences</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07 Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09 Engineering</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Economics</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 10.1 The multi-disciplinary links between two-digit FoR 19 Studies in Creative Arts and Writing code and other FoR codes

This type of collaboration is seemingly most natural. Screen producers do indeed work on productions that have mostly culture and education in their content. The problem arises only when the funding allocated to the multi-disciplinary collaborators flows mostly to one discipline at the expense of the other.

The funding data, in Table 10.2, suggests that this may be happening. In comparative terms the FoR 19 category (Studies in Creative Arts and Writing) managed to attract only a modest amount of funding for its research activities compared to its adjacent FoR 20 (Language, Communication and Culture) category. Specifically, the two-digit FoR 20 discipline Language, Communication and Culture, which had championed the dual discourse of academia plus creative arts practice for some years, had performed comparatively well, getting more than three times the amount of funds allocated to FoR 19 ($102,880,603/ $32,424,756).
The same picture emerges when the four digit FoR codes are examined from the same source. For example, in Table 10.3 the funding allocated to 1902 Film, Television and Digital Media research ($7,675,520) seems comparatively small for the research category that is normally associated with expensive infrastructure and equipment.

It is evident from the above table that the four digit FoR code 2002 Cultural Studies – another champion of screen production – performed particularly well by attracting nearly 5 times the amount of funding given out to FoR 1902 Film, Television and Digital Media ($34,461,832 vs. $7,675,520).

The funding successes of FoR 20 Language, Communication and Culture are admirable. However, it is questionable if the discourse of creative arts practice championed by these groups has helped the Australian film industry, which is, at the date of writing, practically non-existent.

It is recommended here that the principle underpinning the multi-disciplinary research be examined: the assumption that in multi-disciplinary research projects knowledge flows both ways across disciplinary boundaries is only an assumption and an assumption that should be tested. The amount of funds that flow to the discipline is a good test of this assumption. If
the flow of funds to comparable multi-disciplinary collaborators is unequal it may be that the emerging multi-disciplinary research is a simple arrangement for diverting funds from one discipline to another with little regard to the flow of knowledge.

10.4 Crucial Test for the Screen Production Sector

With hindsight it is possible to suggest some general conclusions about creative arts research, namely: excellent research in creative arts will not arise from senior professors who are not creative arts practitioners, and nor will it arise from anti-intellectual practitioners who pride themselves upon their anti-intellectualism.

The solution has always been simple: excellent research in creative arts will arise from vibrant scholars who are excellent practitioners.

To test this proposition it is necessary to ask some crucial-test questions: Does this combination of scholarship and art exists? Is it possible to give an example that demonstrates the existence of such a scholarly combination? If a satisfactory example cannot be found, then the proposition that art and academia are very different, and not compatible, may well still be valid.

One recent example will suffice to dispel any such doubts. It is the film The Act of Killing. The details of this film are available on the University of Westminster website at:


“The Act of Killing focuses on the impunity and prestige enjoyed by perpetrators of the 1965–1966 genocide in Indonesia (historians estimate between 500,000 to 2.5 million victims).”

“The film is the result of five years of collaborative work from:

Josh Oppenheimer, a senior research fellow in MAD,
Prof. Joram ten Brink, the director of DocWest Research Centre in CREAM /School of Media Arts and Design and the Principal investigator of the AHRC research project,
Final Cut for Reel production company in Denmark and a large number of broadcasters and foundations across Europe and the USA.”

The most important detail to note from the website is that the initial support for this film came in the form of a substantial grant from the British Research Council.³
Illustration 10.1 The official poster for *The Act of Killing*

At the time of writing *The Act of Killing* has attracted the following awards and festival exhibitions:
AWARDS
Berlin Film Festival 2013 – Panorama Audience Award
Berlin Film Festival 2013 – Prize of the Ecumenical Jury
IF Istanbul 2013 – Prize of the SIYAD jury (Turkish Film Critics' Association)
Danish Film Academy 2013 – Best Feature Documentary
FiCUNAM, Mexico 2013 – Audience Award
ZagrebDox, 2013 – Movies that Matter Award
One World, Prague 2013 – Best Film
Geneva International Human Rights Film Festival 2013 – Gilda Vieira de Mello Prize
Danish Film Critics Association – Special Prize 2013 (Sær-Bodil)
Festival de Cinéma Valenciennes 2013 – Grand Prize
Festival de Cinéma Valenciennes 2013 – Special Mention, Critic’s Jury
IndieLisboa 2013 – Amnesty International Award
BelDocs 2013 – Grand Prix for Best Film
DocumentaMadrid 2013 – First Prize of the Jury
DocumentaMadrid 2013 – Audience Award
Planete + Doc Warsaw 2013 – Audience Award
Planete + Doc 2013 – Grand Prix of Lower Silesia
DocsBarcelona 2013 – Best Film Award (Grand Prize)
Sheffield Doc/Fest 2013 – Grand Prize
Biografilm Festival Italy 2013 – Grand Prize
Grimstad Short and Documentary Film Festival 2013 – Grand Prize
Royal Anthropological Institute Film Festival 2013 – Basil Wright Prize
Human Rights, Human Dignity Int. Film Festival Myanmar – Aung San Suu Kyi Award for Best Documentary
Sheffield Doc/Fest 2013 – Audience Award

FESTIVALS
2012
Telluride Film Festival
Toronto International Film Festival
2013
Berlin International Film Festival
IF Istanbul Independent Int. Film Festival
ZagrebDox
SXSW, Austin
True/False, Columbia
Movies that Matter, Haag
One World Int. Human Rights Documentary Film Festival, Prague
FiCUNAM Int. Film Festival in Mexico
The International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights (FIFDH), Geneva
Tempo Festival, Stockholm
One World Int. Human Rights Documentary Film Festival, Romania
Luxembourg City Film Festival
FICG, Guadalajara, Mexico
Hong Kong Int. Film Festival
ELTE Documentary Film Festival, Hungary
New Directors, New Films, New York
Planete Doc, Warsaw, Poland
Festival de Cinéma Valenciennes
Human Rights Watch, Chicago
Bermuda International Film Festival
Available Light Film Festival, Yukon, Canada
Global Visions Film Festival, Edmonton, Canada
Lightbox - Human Rights Watch Film Festival, Toronto, Canada
DOCVILLE - Rencontres Intentionales du Documentaire de Montréal, Canada
Calgary Underground Film Festival, Canada
Titanic Film Festival, Hungary
BAFICI, Buenos Aires
IndieLisboa, Portugal
Urban Nomad Film Festival, Taiwan
DocAviv, Israel
BelDocs, Serbia
Montclair Film Festival, New Jersey
San Francisco Int. Film Festival
Biografilm Festival- Bologna, Italy
RAI Film Festival- Edinburgh, Scotland
Sydney Film Festival, Australia
Melbourne Film Festival, Australia
Dark Mofo Festival, Tasmania
MOOOV, Belgium
Docville, Belgium
Sheffield Doc/Fest, UK
Open City Docs Fest - London, UK
AFI Docs (formerly SilverDocs), US
Gimli Film Festival – Manitoba, Canada
HomeWorks – Beirut, Lebanon
The Norwegian Short Film Festival – Grimstad, Norway
DocsBarcelona – Spain
Transilvania Int. Film Festival, Romania
Ismailia Film Festival – Cairo, Egypt
Lima Independente – Peru
Human Rights, Human Dignity Film Festival – Myanmar

The added irony of *The Act of Killing* for Australian screen producers is that the film was set in Indonesia – Australia’s immediate and the most important neighbor.

What can also be said with some certainty is that this kind of projects is not likely to arise in Australia unless the present regime of the ARC funding for creative arts projects is changed. The ARC needs to find a mechanism of supporting practice-based scholars and not commentators on practice-based research. Above all the ARC should fund creative arts practice, commensurate with the sector’s cultural and commercial importance. The funds given to Creative Arts, in HERDC Category 1—Australian Competitive Grants Research Income, are at the moment, are depressingly minimal as indicated by the data published by 2012/ ARC-ERA Report (p 29-32):


If this regime of funding is maintained it will do a great disservice to Australian culture and the Australian economy.

10.5 Joint Research Engagement (JRE)

One should not be entirely pessimistic. There may be changes afoot, as indicated by recent government initiatives such as Joint Research Engagement - *Research Skills for an Innovative Future: A research Workforce Strategy to cover the decade to 2020 and beyond*:

“The Joint Research Engagement (JRE) scheme gives emphasis to end-user research by encouraging and supporting collaborative research activities between universities, industry and end-users, beyond those specifically supported by competitive grants.”

The screen production sector should explore this research engagement option.
10.6 Recommendations on the ARC Research Categories

Service industries and cultural industries are a major component of the global economy. If Australia is to share the opportunities arising from these sectors of the global economy it will need to invest in the innovations that underpin these industries. It seems quite fashionable at the moment for many non-practice-based disciplines to speak on behalf of practice-based creative arts disciplines with questionable benefit to the practice-based researchers. To create a healthy research culture that will underpin new innovations in the screen production sector, the sector needs to ensure that research funds are not diverted away from it to other disciplines that speak on its behalf. Accordingly the following action is recommended:

- It is recommended here that the principle underpinning the ARC multi-disciplinary research category be examined to ensure that funding is distributed proportionally to all collaborative disciplines. The assumption that knowledge flows both ways across disciplinary boundaries in multi-disciplinary research projects is only an assumption and an assumption that should be tested. The amount of funds that flow to each of the disciplines is a good test of this assumption. If the flow of funds to comparable multi-disciplinary collaborators is unequal it may suggest that the inter-disciplinary research is a simple arrangement for diverting funds from one discipline to another with little regard to the flow of knowledge.

For these overtures to the ARC to be successful, the sector needs to be clear about what it stands for and argue its case. Defining some core features of the sector is the subject of the next section of this report.

Notes and references 10

1. See SPARC Survey in Appendix A and questions 9-12 in particular.
2. Another explanation is that screen producers are not applying. This may be so for a range of reasons such as a lack of PhD qualification, a lack of seniority.
4. The screen production collaborators can be discerned from Question 12 and 13 in the SPARC Survey (Appendix A).
11. Strategy 2: Defining the Limits of the Discipline

11.1 Screen Production as a Discipline

Postgraduate research education programs in screen production are now commonplace in Australian universities – these were reported in around 30 institutions in the first part of this report. The sector has grown rapidly in the last 15 years and yet it is still not entirely understood by the wider academic community. Its growth has not been accompanied by a commensurate adjustment of academic regulations, which for the most part continue to be based on the established paradigms of scholarship and on empirical, scientific and written conventions.

On the conventional scholarship side there is an increasing acceptance that practice-based creative arts scholarship is a valid way of approaching certain research questions. Similarly, the creative arts sector has gone some way towards accommodating conventional scholarship methodologies.

As a result of this scholarly accommodation, contemporary academia operates on two strands of scholarship: the established strand of conventional scholarship and the emerging strand of creative arts scholarship.

11.1.1 Methodology

The coexistence of these two strands of scholarship within academia rests on many unresolved issues and presuppositions. For example, conventional scholarship has reasonably articulate, seemingly predictable, objective and verifiable methodologies. Can we say something similar for the methodologies of the creative arts sector? Can these methodologies be described, measured, prescribed? How can such work be evaluated? What are the observables, the evidence and the verification processes of creative methods? What is the role of subjectivity, emotion, sensuality, audience and impact in this verification? This type of research output is still considered by many academics as being essentially sensual, subjective and not all that scholarly. Problems of evaluating practice-based research of this kind bring into question existing academic regulations, notions of authorship, validation procedures, concepts of originality, and even the very notion of academic practice.

If we are to set screen production research on firm philosophical and institutional basis, the differences between the visual mode of “writing” with all its drama, emotions, subjectivity and sensuality, and conventional academic writing needs to be resolved.

If screen production research and postgraduate research is to flourish, the foundation of the discipline needs to be consolidated.

11.1.2 Defining the Discipline

There are many image-making activities that do not explicitly invoke screen production. For example mediated images are the foundation of much that is the computer, IT, simulation and games industries. Images are used to communicate a plethora of disciplines from museum displays, ethnography, ancient history, medicine, biology, wildlife zoology, marine science, forensic science to name a few. Do all these images belong to the discipline of screen production?

If the sector were to decide that all these practices do belong to screen production it would face the risk that every recorded, mediated, animated and rendered image would be deemed an element of the screen production discipline? Potentially there is a risk that the discipline would be defined by the audio-visual medium itself. Even CCTV recordings may have to be considered as an element of the screen production discipline.
Developing a collaborative national postgraduate research program for 22 Australian film schools

Historically, there was indeed a tendency within academia to define screen production as an audio-visual craft, probably because until quite recently created images were not all that plentiful. For example photographs that are older than 100 years are comparatively rare and moving pictures even more so. There is, however, no shortage of visual material at the present moment. Rather, the opposite is the case – images are to be found everywhere and on every topic. Not all of these images should be embraced by the screen production discipline. For all these reasons it may be timely for screen producers to reconsider the limits of what they do as a discipline and redefine their discipline afresh.

11.1.3 Practice-based research

Screen production is a complex and collaborative activity best described schematically with Figure 11.1.

![Figure 11.1](image)

**The defining element of screen production in this diagram is at the centre of this circle where all the filmic codes converge together. The individual codes are always meaningful in the context of this overall effect. They only have a value when they add to the phenomenological experience of the production.**

11.1.4 Cinematic Experience – Diegetic Form of Life

There is a moment when the “magic” of this orchestra of codes is activated. Every editor is familiar with the moment when this magic comes into existence; suddenly everything seems to fall into place and the filmic diegesis comes alive. At that moment we no longer feel that
we are watching a collection of fragmented performances or beholding an artificial narrative. Instead a virtual world unfolds before us that seems in every way life-like, sufficiently so for us to feel that we are beholding an abstract (diegetic) form of life.

11.1.5 Research on Creative Practice

It is all too easy to forget this phenomenological aspect of the filmic experience when studying creative practice such as screen production. When this happens the multidimensional logic of the film’s experience collapses, the vision is broken and the magic is lost. This is when the film is reduced to the content of its parts, when it becomes its linear plot defined by the content of its anthropology, history, mythology and everything else conceivable.

Studying elements of creative practice tends to displace the image-maker as a research contributor as the following sketch indicates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film</th>
<th>=</th>
<th>historian</th>
<th>+ filmmaker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Film (History program)</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>scientist</td>
<td>+ filmmaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film (Natural science)</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>biologist, zoologist</td>
<td>+ filmmaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film (Ethnography)</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>anthropologists</td>
<td>+ filmmaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film (Musical productions)</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>musician</td>
<td>+ filmmaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film (Drama – fiction)</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>scriptwriter</td>
<td>+ filmmaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film (Drama – performers)</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>actor</td>
<td>+ filmmaker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In these circumstances the filmmaker is generally given a secondary role as someone who records the research of someone else. In the extreme case the act of filmmaking is equated, in some ways, to the act of looking at life-like situations. In this perspective the filmmaker merely adds some “smoke and mirrors” to create the magic of cinema.

This uninformed position is compounded further when the research component is a work of fiction. At present, research and fiction do not readily mix within academia and there are no signs that a reconciliation will take place any time soon – unless the difference that separates the two in creative arts is clearly understood.

11.1.6 Liminal Space

If a film is reduced to the content of its parts it is possible to talk clearly about some aspect of its construction. However, filmic experience is anything but clear. It arises from contradictory conflations of space, time and value. The observer is caught in the ambiguous space between the audience and the screen, between here and there, now and then, him and her, good and bad. This experience is not an oscillation between the two poles of any logical oppositions. We do not oscillate between the action on the screen and the awareness that we are in the audience. The cinematic experience spans the liminal space of two disjunctive logical terms that are simultaneously affirmed: the spectator is both here and there, him and her, good and bad. This experience defines a very specific – some would say trance-like – type of phenomenology that we are yet to understand fully. It is in here that Arnold van Gennep would locate his “tabula rasa”, Turner his “ritual process”, Deleuze and Guattari their “inclusive disjunctive synthesis”, Lacan his “Imaginary Order”, Bateson and Mead their “1000 plateaus”.2 If the experience of visual engagement is ignored the defining element of screen production is lost.

It is the filmic experience with all of its trance-like phenomenology and ambiguous logic that is the defining attribute of the screen production. And it is the film experience that distinguishes the film from its content. Hence:

A film (experience) with historical events is not history on film.
A film (experience) with a journey is not geography on film.
A film (experience) with religious content is not religion on film.
A film (experience) with Indigenous content is not ethnography on film.
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Similarly:

History on film need not be a filmic experience.
Geography on film need not be a filmic experience.
Religion on film need not be a filmic experience.
Ethnography on film need not be a filmic experience.

In other words, film content and film experience are not interchangeable – they should not be confused with one another.

11.1.7 Practice-based research - Liminal Logic

The logical structures that given rise to the experience of cinema are quite different from the linear syllogism used by conventional scholars. The filmic experience cannot be true or false in a way that a proposition can be described as true or false. The cosmology created by a good drama is most often based on ethical ambiguity rather than the ethical clearances legislated by research regulators. For the same reason the filmic text is best described by perpetual conflict rather than by the “central research question” that is fetishized by conventional scholarship.

This is why filmmakers often describe the essence of the picture they wish to make to commercial funding bodies with a “pitch” a short description that captures the essential conflict of the situation they wish to depict. What the pitch does is to describe in minimal terms the contested cultural positions that will be addressed in the production. In turn, the contested situation projects a constellation of possibilities and these possibilities in turn inform myriad of actors, settings, situations, action and significances – a whole universe of codes.

11.1.8 Economy of Evidence

The magic of the cinematic experience arises from a whole economy of supporting codes. The believability of the production comes into place when all codes implicated in the process support one another and are consistent with the diegetic world that has been created. This support includes the internal coherences of many diegetic life forms colliding with one another: princesses with frogs, hobbits with rings, heroes with villains. Often this complex coalescing of codes will not take place until the fine-cut stage of the post-production process is completed. We should not underestimate the delicate nature of this process. Even a small error in the content or the timing can puncture the diegetic life form created by the production. This is why the “fine-cut” is generally a most time-consuming stage of the production process, although the editing changes may be miniscule.

11.1.9 Impact And Catharsis

The message of an image-based text is supported not only by the economy of its constituent codes but also by emotional and ethical responses. These are not “objective” qualities but this does not mean that they are unimportant to the logic of the diegesis. The emotional qualities are frequently what we take away from a production and cinematic emotion provides us with a signpost for future interrogation of the text. A sentimental response today may well be negated in future reflections.

11.1.10 Modelling

Screen productions often model some contested social situation that has currency for the audience. This is why many topical situations are often addressed in films. One could go so far as to say that if a topic has not been treated in a film it is not likely to be that important or alternatively the taboo that underpins it is too great. As a model of a social situation, it does not matter greatly if the narrative treatment is fictional or non-fictional.
11.1.11 Verification

As a model of some contested social situation, screen production can be considered as an empirical experiment. The verification process for such an experiment is not the same as one finds in social sciences but shares many of its features. Although the production itself may not be considered as falsifiable, it often works with falsifiable options. For example, a production will frequently commence with a most unlikable character (say a “villain”) implicated in action that we may find detestable only to discover ourselves at the end of the screening sympathizing with the person in question and understanding their action (as “heroic”). The transformation of this character is often supported by another screen character who performs the inverse transformation (from hero to villain). A scheme with such parallel and complementary narratives is given in Figure 11.2. On the left we have the villain becoming the hero and on the right we have the hero becoming the villain. All other lines interrogate the relationship between the hero and the villain as the narrative unfolds over time:

![Figure 11.2](image)

11.1.12 Self-reflexivity

Screen productions, generally, have a whole range of symmetrical and complementary characters that interrogate one another. This interrogation, in turn, brings deeper rigor to the narrative statements that are being invoked. Such an intertwined and self-reflexive diegesis may be made up of recursive logical sets and self-referencing parallel loops that resonate with one another and with other external texts. It may be possible to argue that diegetic life forms of this kind come to us with a very strong verification status often summarized with the well-worn adage: “Seeing is believing”.

11.1.13 Different Domains

For all the above reasons it may be counterproductive to look for a direct parallel between two types of scholarships: between practice-based screen production scholarship and conventional scholarship. It may be more appropriate to think of each scholarship type as having its own domain of validity. We often say to production students: “Think visually.” This is another way of invoking the domain of the visual and phenomenological. Conventional scholarship does not work so well in the visual domain. No matter what we
say about Mona Lisa, words will not deliver Mona Lisa. Likewise, image-based scholarship can present us with most believable texts of action but may not be all that useful when dealing with certain forms of abstract mathematics.

11.1.14 Necessary Complexity

We have much to gain by systematically describing the complexities that make up image-based scholarship, for only image-based scholarship can adequately describe the world dominated by images. Reverting to conventional scholarship in these circumstances would be counter-productive, as such conventional scholarship cannot account for all the features of a world in which images are ubiquitous. Hence, screen production academics should not be forced to comply with positivist research methodology from the last century as is still happening today.

11.1.15 Fiction/ Non-Fiction

When screen productions model some contested social situation, it does not matter greatly if the narrative model they use is fictional. This is because, among other things, fictional productions are not without material effects, in the same way that models in science are not without effect in experiments.

It could be argued that everything we know about the world is built upon some abstract model of the world. Likewise, creative works can have profound material consequences if they illuminate our existence. This is self-evident in a world that relies so much on media communication. Appearances matter. Perceptions matter. Our politicians know this all too well. They generally use media messages as a force at a distance.

It is expected that in time institutions like the ARC will come to understand the complexity of image-based texts and will no longer draw such severe distinction between fictional and non-fictional projects as they appear to do at the moment.

11.2 Emerging Forms of Screen Production Research

Cinematic experience provides the sector with the core defining characteristic of screen production research, and this experience should help the sector distinguish what is screen production research and what is not. In most cases one should look for a film-like text with film-like experience. The film-like experience should have the liminal characteristics outlined earlier.

It is a little more difficult to define screen production research when we consider emerging forms of image-making in cyberspace. Nevertheless, cinematic experience and ambiguous cinematic logic provide good templates for emerging forms of screen production. For example, playing with graphic menus on a computer is generally not screen production activity as such, even though editors do use these graphic menus. Research on graphic menus, in general, is not screen production research.

Cyber hyper-texts, cyber installations and interactive texts that offer screen production experience are a legitimate area of screen production research. The experience of immersion is a worthy topic for screen production research; in contrast, construction of immersive technology is not; nor is the production of new cameras, or new digital recorders. Exploring the function of cyber experience is a legitimate area of screen production research for the same reason that exploring the function of filmic experience is a legitimate area of screen production research. Responding to the expressiveness of a face is a legitimate area of screen production research in a way that programming a face-recognition algorithm is not. Filmmakers are not museum curators but the museum work of Greenaway is a legitimate area of screen production research. Very often it will be necessary to consider
each research project on case by case basis to decide if it is screen production research or not.

11.3 Recommendations on the Definition of the Discipline

- Screen productions often model some contested social situation that has currency for the audience. It does not matter greatly if the narrative treatment of such a model is fictional or non-fictional. Accordingly it is recommended that the sector lobby organizations such as ARC and ERA for a more flexible recognition of the screen production scholarship that includes fictional works.

- Research-on-creative-practice and creative-practice-research are different methodological disciplines. Accordingly the sector should lobby ARC and ERA for the separation of these two fields of research into two separate FoR codes.

- For the reason immediately above, it is recommended that the sector lobby ARC to ensure that screen productions projects submitted to it and to ERA are assessed by screen production academics only and not by screen practice commentators.

Notes and References 11

1. Many of the issues in this section of the report were raised in the previous OLT project. Extracts from this writing are included in this report. Specifically it quotes large extracts from Petkovic, J., Assessing Image-Based Scholarship, IM 5: 2009 Conference Proceedings: Dietetic Life Forms and Dietetic Logic

   Petkovic, J., Assessing graduate screen production outputs in nineteen Australian film schools

2. For further reading on liminal topics see the following: Gennep, Arnold van., The Rites of Passage, Chicago, University of Chicago, 1960, Turner, Victor Witter, The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure, Chicago, Aldine Pub., 1969


3. This logical scheme bears some resemblance to the Aristotle’s Square, although one could argue that what is being presented is much more complicated, and hypertext and writerly text are probably better terms. Useful references for additional reading on this include: Ilana Snyder, I., Hypertext, Melbourne University Press, 1996.


Screen production is a complex, inter-disciplinary and group-based activity. Because of its complexity most undergraduate students engage with the straightforward version of the production process – namely the making of short productions. Most postgraduate researchers simply extend the short production form to longer forms such as feature films and documentaries, which are the most frequent form of industry output.

From the point of view of future planning there are two problems with this conventional postgraduate research path:

(i) It is politically unrealistic and economically unsustainable to expect all screen production postgraduate researchers to produce expensive feature length “masterpieces” in a country that has a small and marginal film industry. It is likely that only exceptional candidates will be able to work in this market-driven format.

(ii) In a world that is ever more reliant on image communication the domain of screen production is ever-expanding and changing. These changes should be reflected in any postgraduate program.

Accordingly, to formulate a successful and sustainable postgraduate program in screen production it is recommended that all universities consider splitting their postgraduate programs into two programs:

(1) Industry Program: This program should account for exceptional filmmakers working in the existing industry paradigm. It should seek constructive links with industry at postgraduate and postdoctoral levels. This program should be organized around Professional Doctorate programs with a substantial coursework component. Professional Doctorates in screen production are not common in Australia at the moment, although one respondent in the SPARC Survey indicated that such a program does exist in at least one Australian university. AFTRS would be another natural candidate for developing such a program.

(2) Innovation Program: This program should explore new paradigms of production. It should seek to establish cutting-edge industry beyond the existing industry model.

These two strands of scholarship are depicted schematically in Figure 12.1.

In functional terms the links between the university researchers and the screen industry can be tested by the following two questions:

- What can the university researchers do for the screen industry?
- What can the screen industry do for the university researchers?
Figure 12.1 Recommended pathways for postgraduate and postdoctoral development in screen production
Whenever possible, the two strands of research should engage one another as the Figure 12.2 sketch indicates.

![Diagram of Research Program, Industry Program, Innovation Program, PhD, New Industry Links, Professional Doctorate, Postdoctoral Fellows, Artist-in-Residence, Research Output]

Figure 12.2 Potential synergies of the proposed dual pathway postgraduate scheme

12.1 Strategies of Linking Academia with Industry

From the point of view of the university researchers, the links between academia and the screen industry are quite straightforward. Many academic staff members have industry experience and many industry members frequently teach at universities on part-time basis.

The same cannot be said about the industry funding organizations, as outlined in the following letter to the Minister for the Arts. In the late 2011, the National Cultural Policy Discussion Paper was launched by the Honorable Minister for the Arts, Mr Simon Crean, MP, and responses were invited from interested parties. The project leader prepared a submission on behalf of the project group. This submission is included below.
12.2 National Cultural Policy Discussion Paper (Detail)

TO: The Honorable Minister for the Arts, Mr Simon Crean, MP
Date: October 2011

The Honorable Minister,

We, the undersigned are members of the ALTC-funded Innovation and Development project entitled Developing A Collaborative National Postgraduate Research Education Program for 22 Australian Films Schools.

Collectively, we welcome the four national cultural policy goals identified by the National Cultural Policy Discussion Paper – diversity, innovation and participation, excellence and socio-economic goals.

We are now writing to you to draw your attention to:

(i) the importance of the emerging university creative arts research sector in attaining these goals;

(ii) and to underline the need for the establishment of strong research links between the creative industries and the university creative arts research sector.

A range of federal government policies already endorses this type of university–industry research linkage including the Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Grant Scheme and the Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Program administered by the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR).

While the principle of university–industry research links is welcomed by most, in practice this is not always acted on in the creative arts – most probably because practice-based research in creative arts is a comparatively recent development and its importance is yet to be recognized fully by a range of cultural organizations and policy makers.

We specifically wish to draw your attention to the policies of the existing federal and state screen funding organizations, which do not endorse or encourage university–industry research linkage. For historical reasons these organizations have grown distant from the university research sector and this distance is maintained today by what we consider to be outdated and inappropriate funding policies that are counterproductive to all. For example, postgraduate practice-based researchers are excluded from accessing production funding through government film financing organizations as a matter of policy. This is in stark contrast to other industries that do recognize the importance of succession planning and that do support the new generation of postgraduates. Without such succession planning and rejuvenation there is a great risk of ossification and decline in the effectiveness of these screen funding organizations and in the industry as a whole. Accordingly, we consider it in the national interest that the funding anomaly, which excludes postgraduate researchers from accessing screen industry funds, be corrected. We recommend that this be done with a clear policy directive from the Minister to the screen funding organizations.

If the funding policies of these organizations were changed and realigned with the funding policies of other comparable industries we are confident that this would give a major impetus to the four cultural policies goals mentioned in your National Cultural Policy Discussion Paper while unleashing the research potential of 22 Australian film schools. The likely outcome of such funding realignment will be a flow of innovation from the university sector to the industry that may well lead to a new kind of renaissance in the screen and related industries. Failure to do this will have consequences that are equally dramatic, in our
Developing a collaborative national postgraduate research program for 22 Australian film schools

opinion, as Australia will have two areas of major cultural investment, namely the university research sector and the screen funding sector, which are effectively working against one another. This will greatly harm our international competitiveness in what is arguably a vital area of economic and cultural development.

The nature of the problem as we see it is set out in the attached document. Should you have any questions on this matter our team would be more than happy to assist in any way we can.

Dr Josko Petkovic, (Project Leader), NASS, Murdoch University, Western Australia
Associate Professor Gillian Leahy, UTS, New South Wales
Professor Ian Lang, VCA, Melbourne University, Victoria
Leo Berkeley, RMIT University, Victoria
Professor Herman Van Eyken, Griffith University Film School, Queensland
Nicholas Oughton, Griffith University Film School, Queensland
Alison Wotherspoon, Flinders University, South Australia

CREATIVE ARTS RESEARCH: UNIVERSITY–INDUSTRY LINKS

Most research-based industries in Australia have direct and constructive links with the university research sector. Researchers move easily between universities and industry in both directions, in science, medicine, engineering, law, economics just to name a few. Most industries welcome value added R&D contribution from the university sector and are happy to fully or partly fund this partnership. Similarly, the Federal government wants the university researchers to link with industry and to add value to it thorough their research projects. The Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Grant Scheme and the Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Program administered by the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR) were created for this reason. Both schemes are sensitive to the sustainable and renewable needs of research and usually encourage grant applications that include postdoctoral fellowships, postgraduate researchers and early career researchers.

Historical Anomaly: In contrast to most other complex industries the film industry did not start with any direct links with the university research sector. This is because there was no tertiary film training or research in Australia until 1969. As a consequence a different R&D arrangement arose following the emergence of the 1970s Australian New Wave film industry. At that time screen researchers consisted of heroic individuals associated with public and private organizations such as Film Australia, the Australian Film Commission, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, AFTRS, along with a range of state-based public and private organization including Film West, Film Victoria, South Australian Film Corporation and FTO. Many of these organizations funded and managed a range of developmental, experimental, and innovative schemes.

Emerging Potential: During this time the university sector provided mostly undergraduate training. Master of Arts was the high-end qualification for creative artists in general. However in the last three decades the situation has changed greatly following a rapid growth of students attending the university-based screen production programs. The 2011 AFTRS Corporate Plan describes it well:

Communications and media courses are high demand courses in the tertiary sector. In 2008 the sector (including both public and private higher education providers) offered 1055 qualifications that specialised, or offered a major study component in communications and/or creative arts. Of these 1055 qualifications, 537 are undergraduate qualifications and 518 are postgraduate qualifications. These numbers illustrate the strength of demand for education and training in screen and related creative industries.¹

In addition to AFTRS there are now over 20 university-based films schools that cater for these students in Australia and each year this number keeps growing by popular demand.²
Developing a collaborative national postgraduate research program for 22 Australian film schools

The most exciting element of this development is that the best students are now going on to do honours and higher research degree programs including PhDs. These are practice-based research programs that give rise to creative works as their principal outcome. As a result some of the best filmmakers from the industry can now be found in the university sector as teaching staff and many are themselves undertaking higher research degrees. So much so that the division between creative filmmakers and researchers has mostly disappeared within the university sector. Creative works are now recognized as research and a publication category by the Australian Research Council (since 2000) and are audited as such by the Excellence of Research in Australia (ERA) scheme.

Paradigm Shift: This practice-based research has now replaced the haphazard process that awaited filmmakers when there were no university research programs, and when, after graduation, filmmakers were required to starve or mortgage their houses. This type of spontaneous creative development can still take place outside tertiary institutions but it is becoming less frequent and is found mostly in places where the concentration of the industry is large enough to support it with an equivalent research programs. Large corporations and organizations such as Hollywood studios and the BBC are practice-based universities in their own right – as are Google and Microsoft. These organizations are able to support their own creative practitioners right up to the cutting-edge of the industry development and each year we marvel at the new inventions they bring to us. The internal research structures of these corporations could well be conceptualised as top end practice-based research centres that go beyond PhD, and postdoctoral development.

Unaided research development cannot take place in countries such as Australia with its small film industry – or medical industry for that matter. In general terms, small industries can only support small innovations when such projects are expensive to carry out. However, university-based research programs are an efficient way of dealing with this problem. Research programs identify graduate candidates with greatest potential and support their development often with postgraduate scholarships. This process has served Australia well in advanced fields such as medicine and many areas of science and there is no reason to doubt that it would work for a sophisticated field such as the film industry. For all these reasons practice-based research in creative arts is arguably one of the most innovative, relevant and influential research methodologies available to a small nation such as Australia.

The New Order: It is no longer wise to return to the heroic “starving artist” with Master of Arts scenario. The economic potential of the new media products and the competition that this potential inspires has created a global industry that requires an ever-higher level of knowledge, research and technological sophistication. Within this perspective we take it as self-evident that to train a successful screen industry professional requires continual training and support from undergraduate training to postgraduate research and then to post-doctoral practice. In the future, we expect that the best and most innovative practitioners will be found in the postgraduate and the post-doctoral sections of academia – as is the case with other complex industries. The successful Pixar company provides a good case in point. It grew from a collection of researchers with PhD qualifications. Dick Shoup, the inventor of the SuperPaint program had a PhD in Computer Science from Carnegie Mellon, Alvi Ray Smith was a mathematician who wrote his PhD thesis on automata theory, Ed Catmull had a PhD in Physics. Jon McCormack is a good example of such creative intelligence in Australia. While these are all examples of technical intervention in the art of filmmaking the same logic holds for all disciplines that go into the production of image-based texts.

Practice-based research outputs from 22 Australian film schools dovetails neatly into the four “goals” identified in the National Cultural Policy Discussion Paper, namely a diversity goal, an innovation and participation goal, an excellence goal and socio-economic goal. It should be noted that in the most recent Excellence of Research in Australia (ERA) audit almost every Australian university-based film school that was audited was rated at the world standard or above.
If harnessed properly these film schools represent an enormous reservoir of creative capability. The screen industry can benefit greatly from the value-added potential that exists in these schools. Linking university researchers with industry practice and industry funding is essential for the university sector as well, because practice-based research, like science research, is generally resource intensive and expensive. Ideally one would want there to be an unimpeded university–industry R&D exchange similar to exchange that exists in other complex industries today and as is encouraged by the existing federal policies.

Exclusion: In these circumstances it is surprising to find little if any linkage between the university research sector and the screen industry. This is mostly because the film funding bodies act as funding gatekeepers for industry projects and instead of facilitating links with the university R&D sector, they make it a point of principle to exclude the university sector from the industry. For example, postgraduate candidates are not eligible to apply for any production funds related to their research projects (as indicated earlier). The funding bodies do this because they consider their own funds to be “non-educational” and reject the idea that anyone from a tertiary institution should have access to these “non-educational” funds. They consider this to be an example of the inappropriate “double dipping” into non-educational funds by educational institutions – an institutional taboo – even when the students in question are research students. Paradoxically the same organizations are more than happy to collaborate with print-based researchers and it seems that to them the notion of research excludes practice-based research.

This funding exclusion invokes an archaic period when:

- Filmmaking was something undertaken only after university studies and when the division between education and practical filmmaking was indeed real and self-evident.
- University students, if they did any filmmaking, were trained (at an undergraduate level) and did not participate in value-added research.
- Research was thought to be based on a written analysis and thesis only.
- The art of filmmaking and academia were considered antithetical.
- The high-end degree for a creative artist was Master of Arts.
- All universities were fully funded government organizations.
- Students did not pay any tuition fees

None of these reasons are valid today.

We now have a situation in which high quality and innovative creative practices, emerging naturally from the university sector, are being excluded from industry funds by the policies of the film funding bodies simply because these projects have arisen from the university sector. In many instances the funding bodies tell postgraduates that their projects have merit and will be funded as long as they renounce their links with the university.

From a national interest point of view this is clearly a situation in which everyone misses out. The industry misses out on potential value-added research from 22 film schools. The researcher in the films schools will misses out even more since they do not have access to industry funds. This is not without consequences. At the present, the project support available to a postgraduate for the duration of his or her candidature are very modest and are usually of the order of $2500. In contrast, potential funds offered to “emerging filmmakers” from state and federal funding bodies could be as much as $150,000. Thus, at the completion of an honours program, the best of the new generation of screen production students have an unenviable choice of either going on to do a PhD with minimal support or to abandon their studies and be potentially funded by as much as $150,000.

The Problem: How can one explain the behavior of the funding organizations? Why did they not recognize the changing landscape of film production and the role that the university research sector can contribute to it? We consider that the problem has arisen primarily
because of the ambiguous policies that underpin the funding organizations, which simultaneously are required to be cultural organizations as well as industry organizations. As cultural organizations they seek out the most vibrant, innovative and relevant aspects of the culture. This is essentially an innovative research selection process not all that different from that undertaken by the Australian Research Council in conventional research development. However, as industry-focused organizations these funding bodies also need to optimize the direct and indirect commercialization of the productions they fund.

While these two policy aims are admirable, they tend to work against one another and combining them within each funding organization can have most unfortunate consequences, which serve neither policy aim and potentially undercuts both. At present it is possible for the funding organizations to justify subsidizing poor commercial productions on cultural grounds, while innovative cultural projects can be rejected on perceived commercial grounds. In the worse case scenario this sliding culture–commerce criteria can give rise to works that are commercially unsuccessful and work that is, in most respects, dull and mediocre.

**Long-term Recommendation:** We are of the firm opinion that the cultural brief for the creative arts funding organization should be based on the cutting-edge cultural research and innovation. The Australian Research Council provides a good model for how such projects can be selected for funding – the selection should be based on research excellence in the first instance and unimpeded by other considerations except for the judgment of peers and the research priorities set by the government. Similarly we are of the opinion that commercialization of the cultural IP should rest on its own self-evident successes or failures. If these contradictory functions were separated, innovation would be liberated and the commercialization of projects would be self-evident. Accordingly, we recommend that, as a long-term aim, government should separate the research/innovation and commercialization components of its creative arts funding agencies and film funding organizations in particular.

**Short-term Recommendation:** Our position is predicated on a strongly-held conviction that linking creative researchers from the university sector and the screen industry will increase the quality and the volume of creative output in Australia. We are happy for these assertions to be tested gradually, over time and on the basis of evidence. Accordingly we recommend that realignment of funding bodies should be gradual and evolutionary.

During the interim period we recommend that all barriers to university–industry research links be removed. We suggest that this be done by a policy directive to funding organizations, as this is probably the most efficient way of inculcating a new institutional mindset. Ideally such a policy directive should have succession planning and the university–industry research linkage as a pre-condition for all project funding, as this is in the long-term national interest. It is also a convention already encouraged by the existing federal linkage policies.

Dr Josko Petkovic, October 2011
On behalf of *Developing A Collaborative National Postgraduate Research Education Program for 22 Australian Films Schools* project team, October 2011

**Notes and References 12**

2. University film schools include the following universities: Bond, COFA, CSU, Curtin, Deakin, ECU, Flinders, Griffith, Macquarie, Murdoch, UoN, Notre Dame, UWA, QUT, RMIT, Swinburne, UC, UniSA, UTS, UWS, VCA, in addition to AFTRS.
13. Strategy 4: Organising the Sector

13.1 Collaborative Research Centre

The writing below describes the preparation for the establishment of a collaborative research centre for the screen production sector undertaken during this project. It argues that the sector has much to gain by collaborating. The potential for collaboration has always existed in the sector – broadcast networks were early collaborators at the exhibition end of production. The emergence of the Internet and the National Broadband Network (NBN) have now extended this collaboration potential to all levels of communication. Collaboration may well be synonymous with the Internet and with cyber networks as the emergence of ever more networks indicate, including the following:

Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network (TERN)
This network enables ecosystem scientists to collect, contribute, store, share and integrate data across disciplines. It encourages collaboration and nationally consistent data. Federal Government funding is provided through the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) and ARC Super Science Initiative.

Interoperation and Collaboration Infrastructure (ICI)
The ICI project provided facilitated technological services and support via interoperable and collaborative tools to Australian researchers.

National eResearch Collaboration, Tools and Resources (NeCTAR)
This project is creating national infrastructure to provide Australian researchers with access to a full suite of digitally enabled data and analytic and modelling resources relevant to their research, at their desktop. Federal Government funding is provided through Super Science.

National Imaging Facility (NIF)
This project has established a national network that provides state-of-the-art imaging of animals, plants and materials for the Australian research community to aid medical research and the development of pharmaceuticals. Federal Government funding is provided through NCRIS and Education Investment Fund (EIF).

Australian National Data Service (ANDS)
This service transforms Australia’s research data environment through better managing, connecting, enabling discovery of and supporting the multiple use of data. Federal Government funding is provided through NCRIS and Super Science.

13.2 Australian Screen Academy

The paper below was circulated to all project partners. The underlying assumption in the paper is that collaboration is not only good for the sector, but it may well be the principle method of organizing many research activities in the future.

POSITION PAPER ON THE NEED TO CREATE A NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE FOR THE ASPERA SECTOR

There are three high-end development pathways for screen producers and filmmakers in Australia.
Developing a collaborative national postgraduate research program for 22 Australian film schools

**AFTRS:** The first one is the professional program run by Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS) with an MA as its terminal degree.

**The Industry:** The second high-end route for screen producers and filmmakers is the grant-based “investment” scheme run by Screen Australia and a range of state funding organizations. These schemes fund the best production teams from a pool of available practitioners based on peer assessment and industry approved guidelines and criteria.

**University Sector:** The third high-end development option for screen producers is found in Australian universities (approximately 22), via their screen production undergraduate, postgraduate coursework and postgraduate research programs, the latter with PhD or DCA as the relevant terminal degree.

All these schemes are based on “excellence” and “innovation” of one kind or another but only the university sector has the broad systematic programs that start with training of a large number of undergraduate students from which the elite, generally at Distinction level or above are permitted to go on into postgraduate and research programs. Since innovation and originality are defining features of research, the university postgraduate research programs should produce the most work that is on the cutting-edge. Hence it is in the universities where one will find the next generation of “film schools”. Future “film schools” will, logically, extend their creative innovation through post-doctoral fellowships and grant-driven research centre activities.

**The Future:** The need for such research-based “film schools” has never been higher as evidenced by the proliferation of image-based technologies, software, tablets, iPhones, Google-glasses and such. The changing interfaces across platforms and types of media alongside the digital convergences with libraries, galleries, museums, broadcasters, cinemas, archives and individual users will result in these developments becoming increasingly important. To complete globally, in this digital arena, it is necessary to have flexible and nuanced research programs.

Screen production institutions have undergraduate, postgraduate and institutional research teams all over Australia to work on these developments. Their programs are in great demand by students. They also operate on a group-based research training and practice-based methodology that is intrinsically interdisciplinary. This is rare in the Humanities and provides much-valued industry-ready training ideal for the emerging creative industries. As with the established science disciplines, what this sector requires to advance is a successful R&D program based on a sustainable funding model, complementary to the other high-end screen production pathways (AFTRS and Screen Agencies).

**Silos:** For all the above reasons the three high-end development programs outlined earlier should be connected and integrated with one another. Unfortunately this is not the case. Instead of seeking efficiencies by interconnections, integration and synergies the three schemes tend to see themselves as competitors rather than as part of a whole screen development industry.

The state and federal funding agencies, in particular, are quite protective of the funds they reserve for the producers they select to fund. They do this with rules that tend to exclude the postgraduate candidate from having access to what is a very limited pool of funds. For example, most Screen Australia application forms for funding demand that the applicant declare they are not a film student.

**ARC:** The university screen production researchers face additional difficulties because the Australian Research Council (ARC), the traditional source of university research funding, generally do not fund creative projects that involve producing “art” – even when this art is research based. They leave these type of artistic activities to the Australian Council for the Arts. The Australian Council for the Arts, in turn, generally does not fund screen-based work other than work that would fit in a gallery or as part of an installation.
Writer: The few brave postgraduates that persist with their lowly funded postgraduate research programs are generally forced to work within the conventional research paradigm based on a single author and a written thesis – the very antithesis of what most group-based screen producers aspire to do. Something similar can be said for the research activities of the screen production academics as well.

Status quo: As a consequence of these funding restrictions, postgraduate research programs in screen production tend to be small and are often treated as costly academic oddities rather than as programs that have innovative research methodologies of great potential value.

Ironically the anemic state of ERA research outputs in screen production only serves to support the established and the narrowcast forms of screen production undertaken by state and federal film funding bodies. In turn, this is supported solely by the modest AFTRS MA program and by the TAFE-trained crews. It could be argued that, by excluding innovative engagement with the university research sector, the screen production “industry” has been structurally organized to remain static. It could further be argued that the non-existent film industry is the evidence of this stagnation even after billions of dollars have been invested in it.

Individual universities can do little about this situation. Almost every university with a screen production program in Australia has attempted to engage creatively with state and federal film funding agencies to argue for co-operation in the funding of screen research. They have done this with little success, even when administrators of these schemes have seen value in such co-operation.

If the university screen production sector is to find solutions to these problems it will have to do something that has not been tried before and do it in a way that gives it new strength. One strategy offers itself as a solution to the problems described – collaboration.

Network Collaboration: The potential for collaboration has always existed in Australian Screen Production Education and Research Association (ASPERA) sector. However the Internet and the National Broadband Network (NBN) have made this potential into a reality. Collaboration may well be synonymous with the Internet and with cyber networks. This is valid for all disciplines. However, no other Humanities sector is as suited to exploring the potential of this cyber network as is the ASPERA sector.

National Network: A proposed collaborative research centre/ “network” hub can dovetail directly into the NBN development (or its equivalent). If the staff in the screen production sector were to collaborate, collectively they would be able to create a research-based super-university network in screen production with super research capacity including lobbying influence.

Collaboration does not exclude other (previously mentioned) funding alternatives (ARC, Screen Australia); rather collaboration makes it more likely for the sector to tap into these funding sources. For example, the two high-end grant schemes, the Cooperative Research Centre and the ARC Centre of Excellence, are almost defined by institutional collaboration. Application for either of these two schemes will be greatly enhanced by collaboration of researchers in the sector, and greatly reduced by not having such institutional collaboration. Establishing an ongoing collaborative research centre will provide an excellent foundation for such future grant application options and a win-win outcome for those involved.

Global–Local Network: By collaborating in this fashion it is possible for the sector to become big and small simultaneously. It can operate as a national collaborative network – a super university research centre – and also be “small”, by directing the local groups towards local end-user issues and clients.
**Synergies:** Through research collaboration ASPERA institutions will gain all the advantages that come with collaboration. Collaboration is intrinsically productive and creative for all the reasons outlined already.

**Consciousness raising:** Collaboration increases awareness of research issues and this in itself leads to new research projects.

**Innovation:** Collectively the sector can give rise to projects at a higher level of conceptualization than could not be conceived previously.

**New Research Terrain:** Collaboration introduces new research territory unlikely or impossible to be undertaken by a single institution.

**New paradigms of research:** Collaboration makes it possible to explore new paradigms of research in screen production especially those associated with the emerging cyber networks and digital data mining.

**National importance and priority:** By working collaboratively the ASPERA sector will be able to identify important areas of research that have local, national and international importance.

**Funding:** The collaborative partners should be able to obtain funding for these staff-led research projects if these are deemed to be socially important.

**Postgraduate places:** Projects that are staff-led and grant-funded can be allocated funded postgraduate places and in doing so grow the postgraduate research sector.

**ACTION PLAN**

For all the above reasons it is proposed that the ASPERA sector create a collaborative research network that:

- operates as a national collaborative Research Centre with the aim of proactively seeking collaborative projects, and national and international collaborative grants
- supports MA (research) and PhD programs and postgraduates in screen production whenever this is possible
- hosts a Learned Academy: the ASPERA sector needs the same type of Learned Academy as scientist have in the Australian Academy of Science (AAS) and social scientist have in the Academy of the Social Science in Australian (ASSA). The membership of these learned academies is made up by the most successful researchers with self-evident national and international reputations. Collectively such a group would provide effective representatives for the ASPERA research sector.

**Name:** The simplest label for the proposed research entity is the Australian Screen Academy. The acronym ASA is sufficiently different from the AAS of the Australian Academy of Sciences. The ASA acronym also invokes sentimental reflections on the ASA rating of the film stock, which seems appropriate.

Accordingly it is proposed that a collaborative research entity entitled the Australian Screen Academy (ASA) be established. The establishment of ASA would be initiated by the following Memorandum of Understanding once it is signed by deans of academic units that offer screen production programs or by academic staff with similar institutional authority.
Memorandum of Understanding

for the establishment of the

Australia Screen Academy
(ASA)

The academic unit in this University is a host to screen production programs and in principle we agree to participate in the formation of the National Australian Screen Academy (ASA) with like-minded institutions and under the following conditions:

1. **MEMBERSHIP**

   1 (i) ASA will consist of eligible member institutions. Eligible institutions at this date are: Bond University, Charles Sturt University, Curtin University, Deakin University, Edith Cowan University, Flinders University, Griffith University, Macquarie University, Murdoch University, QUT, RMIT University, Swinburne, The University of Adelaide, University of Canberra, The University of Melbourne, University of NSW, The University of Newcastle, The University of Notre Dame, University of South Australia, University of Technology, Sydney, University of Tasmania, The University of Western Australia, University of Western Sydney.

   1 (ii) The member institutions will consist of those institutions that sign this in-principle Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

   1 (iii) This MOU needs to be signed by the Dean of the academic unit offering screen production programs or by academic staff with similar institutional authority.

   1 (iv) The content of the this MOU will provide the initial guiding principles for the ASA.

2. **THE GOVERNING BOARD**

   2 (i) The MOU signatories or their delegates will constitute the ASA Governing Board.

   2 (ii) The function of the Board will be to support the principles enshrined in the mutually agreed MOU principles.

   2 (iii) The ASA Board can change the initial ASA MOU principles by a simple majority vote from the total number of governing members.

   2 (iv) For the purpose of governance each member institution will have one vote.

3. **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

   3(i) The Governing Board of deans will elect a five person Executive Committee.

   3(ii) Members of the ASA Executive Committee should have an established track record in practice-based research (publications, grants and PhD completions) and with PhD qualifications or formally recognized equivalent qualifications.

   3(iii) The Executive Committee must comprise members from at least three different states and/or territories.

   3 (iv) The current President of ASPERA will be the sixth member of the ASA Executive Committee.
3(v) The Executive Committee will elect its own Chairperson and any other position it considers necessary for the running of the Board.

4. **ASA AIMS**

4(i) ASA is established to be an autonomous research arm of the Australian Screen Production Education and Research Association (ASPERA). It is expected that the members of the ASA Governing Board are all members of ASPERA.

4(ii) The principle aim of ASA, as described by this MoU, will be to facilitate and support research and postgraduate research in the ASPERA sector.

4(iii) Specifically, ASA will do this by hosting under its umbrella label: (a) a collaborative Research Centre, and (b) a Learned Academy

5. **ASA RESEARCH CENTRE**

5 (i) As a Research Centre ASA will be an inclusive community of ASPERA researchers working on collaborative research projects.

5 (ii) The Centre will proactively seek collaborative research projects and in this way strengthen and lobby for the ASPERA sector.

5 (iii) Eligible ASA Research Centre membership will be: all screen production staff, postgraduates (those pursuing research MAs and PhDs), screen production post-doctoral fellows and other research centre staff, artists-in-residence, distinguished scholars, adjunct and emeritus staff whose primary research focus is practice-based research in screen production.

5 (iv) The Centre will define itself primarily by research activities that individual institutions cannot undertake alone.

5 (v) In all circumstances the activities of the ASA Research Centre will be to complement and enhance normal institutional research activities and not compete with them.

5 (vi) ASA researchers working on current research project that are wholly or partly designated as an ASA project will be designation as ASA Researchers as well as being researchers of their home institutions.

5 (vii) Outcomes of collaborative research projects will be apportioned to partner institutions in the usual manner (as in ERA stipulation).

6. **ASA POSTGRADUATES**

6 (i) Whenever possible, each ASA collaborative staff-led grant project application should include some funded postgraduate places.

6 (ii) Postgraduates working on the ASA project will be formally designated as ASA postgraduates as well as being the postgraduate of their chosen institution.

7. **LEARNED ACADEMY**

7(i) As a Learned Academy ASA will host the ASA Fellowship. Membership of the ASA Fellowship will be made up of the most successful researchers with self-evident national and international reputations. These members will be selected by nomination and election by existing Fellowship body. This membership will be designated by “Fellow of ASA” or FASA-Fellow of Australian Screen Academy.
7(ii) ASA through its Executive Committee and through ASPERA, will recommend ASA Fellows to other related Learned Academies – the Creative Arts Council, for example.

7(iii) The functioning of the ASA Fellowship can be defined and developed by its Fellows.

7(iv) It is expected that the Learned Academy will set directions for the ASA Research Centre.

8. **INSTITUTION-BASED ASA RESEARCH CENTRE**

8 (i) Each institution will have its own autonomous ASA Research Centre, designated for example as ASA-UTC, ASA-Murdoch, ASA-Griffith, ASAVCA, etc., respectively.

8 (ii) Each institutional representative on the ASA Board will also be the director of their own institutional ASA Research Centre.

8 (iii) The activities of the local Research Centre will be consistent with those of the national Centre and as described by this MOU.

8 (iv) The institutional ASA Research Centre Board will be made up of its director plus any three other full-time academic staff from the following list: research active screen production researchers, institutional screen production research coordinators, deans of screen production programs, directors of practice based research centres or a delegated representative of these.

9. **INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT**

9 (i) Each participating institution agrees to provide $2,000 in-kind support (such as teaching relief) annually for its (one) institutional ASA representative to oversee ASA collaborative research activities.

9 (ii) Additional funding support for each centre is expected to be found from collaborative grant-based projects, consultancies, corporate sponsorships and similar funding sources.

10. **FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS**

10(i) All financial transactions that relate to the collaborative research activities of the Centre will be processed by the host institution as with all other research grants, consultancies, corporate sponsorship and similar funding sources.

11. **STATE-BASED ASA RESEARCH CENTRE**

11(i) Each state will have a state-based ASA Research Centre made up of directors of the institution-based ASA Research Centres in that state. The function of the state-based ASA Research Centre will be to pro-actively seek collaborative projects for the state ASA institutions and in this way strengthen and lobby for the state ASPERA sector.

12. **ASA NETWORK**

12 (i) Through its member institutions ASA will operate as a collaborative research network consisting of hubs and nodes across all states and all screen production institutions.

12 (ii) When first set in place the ASA can be conceived as a research network hub connecting the five state nodes. However, once established this research network can develop “organically” as appropriate.
13. MEETINGS

13 (i) The ASA Institution Board should meet as often as is required to carry out their research functions.

13 (ii) The ASA State Board can meet as often as required but at least once a year.

13 (iii) The ASA Australia Board should meet at least once a year and ideally during the ASPERA AGM Conference.

Signed Date
Name
Position (*)
Institutions

(*) This MOU needs to be signed by the Dean of the academic unit offering screen production programs or position of similar institutional authority.

13.3 ASA Recommendations

The ASA Research Centre was formulated to deal with problems of the screen production sector and in a way that will support the ASPERA community while giving it a strong research impetus and fresh directions. This entire project has contributed greatly to the consciousness-raising in the sector and has stimulated all participants to think about the future for this discipline. For all the reasons outlined in this Report, the ASA program needs to be implemented as soon as possible to revive the sector which, for a range of reasons, is gradually being pushed into teach-only mode.

Emerging networks such as the Creative Arts Learning and Teaching Network (CALTN) can also help. So can the proposed Creative and Performing Arts Council. The establishment of ASA can dovetail easily into both of these networks.
14. Strategy 5: Enhancing the Peak Discipline Body

14.1 ASPERA Evolution

The peak discipline body for screen producers is the Australian Screen Production Education and Research Association. On its webpage the Association is described as follows:

ASPERA is the peak discipline body of Australian tertiary institutions teaching and researching film, video, television and new media as screen based production practices. It was established in 2004 at an initial conference at the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne attended by 16 institutions.1

14.1.1 ASPERA Membership

The ASPERA membership is defined by member institutions that nominate representatives to the Conference:

Full membership of ASPERA is open to Australian Universities, AFTRS, or academic units within a University (faculty, school, department, institute or college) responsible for the teaching and management of screen production and/or research programs where the central objective is the education and advancement of screen practitioners. A University or academic unit as defined above can join ASPERA if one third of their subjects are production based. Each institution or academic unit nominates its representative for ASPERA.2

14.1.2 ASPERA’s Early Days: Functioning sub-committees

In the formative days of ASPERA the member-delegates were heads of schools, deans, directors and leaders of academic units. These delegates were also members of various sub-committees that were established by the annual AGM Conference. One such conference established 9 sub-committees and the conferences themselves were mostly made up of reports and presentations arising from the work that these sub-committees did during the previous year. The work of the sub-committees was directly relevant to the participating institutions and often led to organized collective lobbying. Some early ASPERA AGM Conferences had festivals associated with them – fitting celebrations of the sector’s output.

Then something changed. The change came innocently enough at first and can be attributed mostly to the good intentions of the ASPERA executive committee, whose members diligently set out to improve the quality of the AGM conferences. The paradigm for a good academic conference is well known and the scholarly conference template became the central measure of the ASPERA AGM activities. Well-polished written presentations became the order of the day. A-category text journals were sought for publishing the conference papers. These enterprises dovetailed perfectly with the research outputs demanded by the university research coordinators, even though such output was the very inverse of creative arts output – in both form and methodology. The screenings/ festivals and exchanges of creative works became rare. Around the same time the ASPERA sub-committees were discontinued and with their dissolution went the institutional relevance of ASPERA.

With most of each year’s conference preparation falling on a small number of the Executive Committee members, ASPERA could do little else during the year except to undertake token representations by the Executive members at a range of functions and meetings. The outcomes of these meetings were often not immediately communicated to the sector.
14.1.3 Screen Production Community

Overall the shift of the AGM Conference towards the more conventional template of scholarship resulted in a decrease of ASPERA activities except for the conference. The change did not stop here. It could be argued that the function of the ASPERA itself changed. The new conference format shifted the AGM Conference from being a small circle of delegates from member institution to a gathering of a community of scholars. Each year the conference organizers set out to conscript as many screen production academics from the wider ASPERA community as possible. While there was much value in having such a collegial community of scholars; nevertheless, such a one-off collection of academics, in itself, does not guarantee an efficient way of dealing with the pressing needs of the sector. Instead of acting on behalf of the institutions as was previously done through the work of specific sub-committees, the ASPERA AGM Conference participants came to the conference primarily because of the conference’s philosophical theme. In time, this larger community of scholars came to be considered unofficially as the primary membership of the ASPERA, even though this was at odds with ASPERA’s constitution. At the same time the AGM business of the ASPERA became something of an aside to the main conference presentations. The constitution of ASPERA amplified this tendency still further by the manner the ASPERA Executive was elected.

14.1.4 Executive Committee

The intention of the original ASPERA constitution was for ASPERA to be an inclusive and representative body, and these attributes were built into the membership of the Executive Committee by convention and through the following clauses in the ASPERA constitutions:

14(7) Each year the AGM decide the venue and convener of the next Annual conference and where possible this location is to be rotated amongst participating institutions and amongst states and territories.

14(9) Where possible that the role of Vice President rotates throughout the states and territories.

14(4) Each year the Vice President succeeds the President

These collegial and inclusive clauses had some unexpected consequences. Some states had only one or a small number of ASPERA member institutions. Consequently the representatives from these states became permanent member of the Executive Committee for no other reason than a lack of activity in that particular state. The rotation of the Executive membership also limited the range of candidates available for the Executive. With the shift of ASPERA’s function away from sub-committees and mostly towards the hosting of the AGM Conference, this rotating membership of ASPERA gave rise to the Executive Committees that were generally made up of energetic junior academics who had limited institutional clout or links with their institutional mangers. Many institutional leaders of ASPERA institutions no longer attend the AGM Conference.

Over the years, the link between the ASPERA delegates and their departmental managers became defused, as did the effectiveness of ASPERA. From a number of statements made at the SPARC Colloquium it was evident that some delegates had limited connections with their school deans or research coordinators. The project leader often found that discussions with heads of schools were at odds with positions expressed by the ASPERA delegates. This had consequences for the effectiveness of ASPERA as a peak discipline body and its status as a reference group for this project.

14.1.5 Screen Production Research Sector and the ASPERA

At the start of this project the project leader established links with the heads of academic
units from around 18 institutions that had active screen production programs and were
known to be ASPERA members in previous years. These participants represented the
ASPERA reference group and they were consulted either directly or through the state
cordinators on all issues that that were relevant to the project. In addition there were
another 4 institutions where screen production was emerging or where there were screen
production researchers. As indicated previously, these two groups made up the 22 strong
SPARC Reference group (plus AFTRS) as indicated previously.

The 2010 ERA and 2012 ERA audits reported research activity in the 1902 category from
another eight institutions. These ERA ratings (1–5) are depicted in Table 14.1 with an
additional 8 institutions depicted in rows 23–30:

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<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>ERA 2010</th>
<th>ERA 2012</th>
<th>ASPERA</th>
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Table 14.1 Research Profile of the SPARC participants according to
ERA 2010 and ERA 2012 audit

The research activities of these 31 institutions suggest a very active screen production
sector. A somewhat different picture arises when one looks at ASPERA’s actual membership.
The annual ASPERA 2012–2013 Treasurer’s report gives only 13 (paid-up) members of
ASPERA: Bond, Canberra, Curtin, Deakin, Edith Cowan, Griffith, Macquarie, Melbourne
(VCA), Murdoch, RMIT, NSW (COFA), UWS and AFTRS.

Of these four were absent or abstained from the 2013 AGM meeting.
Of the remaining nine paid-up members, only 5 appear in ERA 2012 for the 1902 category of Film, Television and Digital Media, as indicated in the shaded ASPERA AGM entries in Table 14.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>ERA 2010</th>
<th>ERA 2012</th>
<th>ASPERA MEMBER</th>
<th>ASPERA AGM</th>
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<td>14 COFA/UNSW</td>
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<td>15 UTS</td>
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<td>31 AFTRS</td>
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Table 14.2 2013 Research profile of 2013 ASPERA AGM membership

Curiously, according to the ASPERA Treasure’s 2013 report it appears that three members of the Executive Committee were not paid up members of the Association by the prescribed period.

14.2 ASPERA Recommendations

In recent years ASPERA has developed some admirable and worthy characteristics of inclusiveness and a sense of scholarly community within the screen production sector. However, these attributes have come at the cost of ASPERA’s active disengagement from the leadership of the sector and the discontinuation of its subcommittees. This is unfortunate, for the sector still has a marginal existence within academia and much needs to be done collectively by an effective peak discipline body to rectify this situation. In particular the ASPERA sector urgently needs active leadership to direct its research activities.
Developing such leadership within ASPERA is likely to clash with its governance and its existing modus operandi, which foregrounds the sense of scholarly community rather than creative practice leadership.

Unless this situation is resolved quickly ASPERA will lose relevance and the sector itself will suffer. Arguably the 2013 Treasure’s Report on membership suggests that this critical situation may have set in already.

To rejuvenate ASPERA the following are actions are recommended:

(i) ASPERA delegates should be leaders of the academic units they represent.

(ii) The ASPERA AGM invitation should go to the departmental heads/ deans in the first instance. If unable to attend he or she should nominate the ASPERA delegate and should advise the delegate how to represent the institution.

(iii) ASPERA should reconstitute its sub-committees. The work of the sub-committees should be the focus of the ASPERA AGM Conference.

(iv) The constitution of ASPERA should be modified to enable the election of ASPERA executive committee members according to ability and not according to the representation of the states. The representation of the states should be considered only if it is relevant to ASPERA functions.

Notes and References 14

15. Strategy 6: Documenting the Sector’s Research Outputs

15.1 Publication Data – Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC)

For the screen production sector to be properly recognized as a research discipline it needs to properly document its research output. At the present moment, screen production research output is not collected by the Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC) annual round. In part this is because the only recognized publication format is text-based and no formal mechanism exists for comparing text-based publication output with other publication output formats such as screen texts. This situation ought to change as it has a bearing on how the sector is regarded and funded. Research outputs of screen producers need to be documented for both staff and postgraduate students. This is especially so if the research output of both is intertwined, as argued in this report. The comparison between this non-traditional research output and text-based output should be formally established.

15.1.1 ERA

ERA scheme has helped evaluate the sector’s research output – not by any specified measures but simply by requiring that creative works be assessed by peers. However ERA’s audit also has shortcomings. Some of these are:

- FoR 1902 ERA 2012 output for Film, Television and Digital Media was made up of the following:
  
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book</td>
<td>3 per cent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Chapter</td>
<td>15 per cent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conference Paper</td>
<td>11 per cent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal Article</td>
<td>28 per cent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-traditional Research Output</td>
<td>43 per cent</td>
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  The presence of such a large proportion of conventional research outputs (57 per cent) in the ERA’s FoR 1902 category brings into question the nature of this category that so readily conflates creative works with conventional publications. These are different types of output in kind, size and quality, and should be kept separate. Comparing pieces of writing with group-based creative works is not only inappropriate but generally works against creative works – if only because creative work label hides rather than discloses the work that goes into its production.

- Earlier this report recommended that screen productions should be assessed solely by peers. It is possible to question if ERA assessors are real peers or token peers.

- The relationship between the ERA audit and institutional disciplines is somewhat unclear. Filmmakers are often moved across research categories and groupings in a way that is mostly beyond their control. It seems as if the ERA audit is a kind of a game which aims to optimizing the ERA ranking.

- The relationship between the ERA rating and the funding of the rated programs has not been finalized, hence the relevance of the ERA rating is not entirely clear at the institutional level.

Until these ERA problems are clarified and resolved it is doubtful the sector’s research output will be properly assessed.

In these circumstances the sector itself will need to arrange the evaluation of its research output. Specifically it will have to do the following:
(i) establish a national network of peers to assess creative works produced by screen producers
(ii) establish a comparative measure for creative works in terms of conventional publication values
(iii) confirm that the assessment process is valid
(iv) document these works with the relevant institutions and agencies (such as ERA and ARC).

All the above issues were addressed in great detail by the previous OLT/ALTC project.¹ Some of the considerations and recommendations are reiterated in the Summary of Recommendations list in the next section of the report.

Notes and References 15

16. Summary of Recommendations

To create a healthy screen production research culture the following actions by the sector are recommended:

16.1 ARC Research Categories

It seems quite fashionable at the moment for many non-practice-based disciplines to speak on behalf of practice-based creative arts disciplines, with questionable benefit to the practice-based researchers. To create a healthy research culture that will underpin new innovations in the screen production sector, the sector needs to ensure that research funds are not diverted away from it to other disciplines that speak on its behalf. Accordingly the following action is recommended:

- The screen production sector should invite the ARC to examine the principle underpinning its multidisciplinary research categories to ensure that funding is distributed proportionally to all collaborative disciplines. The assumption that knowledge flows both ways across disciplinary boundaries in multi-disciplinary research projects is only an assumption and an assumption that should be tested. The funds that flow to the disciplines are a good test of this assumption. If the flow of funds to comparable multi-disciplinary collaborators is unequal it may suggest that the interdisciplinary research is a simple arrangement for diverting funds from one discipline to another with little regard to the flow of knowledge.

16.2 The Definition of the Discipline

- Screen productions often model some contested social situation that has currency for the audience. Whether the narrative treatment of such a model is fictional or non-fictional does not matter greatly. Accordingly it is recommended that the sector lobby organizations such as ARC and ERA to recognize the screen production scholarship that includes fictional works.
- Research-on-creative-practice and creative-practice-research are different methodological disciplines. Accordingly the sector should lobby ARC and ERA for the separation of these two fields of research into two separate FoR codes.
- For the same reason as above, it is recommended that the sector lobby ARC to ensure that screen productions projects submitted to it and to the ERA are assessed by screen production academics only and not by screen practice commentators.

16.3 Research–Industry Links

16.3.1 Industry and Innovation

To formulate a successful and sustainable postgraduate program in screen production it is recommended that all universities consider splitting their postgraduate programs in two:

(1) Industry Program: This program should account for exceptional filmmakers working in the existing industry paradigm. It should seek constructive links with the existing industry at postgraduate and postdoctoral levels. This program should be organized around Professional Doctorate programs that have a substantial coursework component.

(2) Innovation Research Program: This postgraduate program should explore new paradigms of production. It should seek to establish cutting-edge industry beyond the existing industry model.
16.3.2 Funding organizations: Research Excellence, Innovation and the Market

The cultural brief and the commercialization brief of the screen funding organizations should be separated. The cultural brief should be based on innovative cultural research and innovation that is at the forefront of its field. The selection should be based on research excellence in the first instance and should be unimpeded by other considerations, except for the judgment of peers and the research priorities set by the government. Similarly, commercialization of the cultural IP should rest on its own self-evident successes or failures. If these contradictory functions were separated, innovation would be liberated and the commercialization of projects would be self-evident.

16.4 ASPERA

To rejuvenate ASPERA as a peak discipline body that can lift the profile of the screen production sector within academia, the following actions are recommended:

(i) ASPERA delegates should be leaders of academic units they represent.

(ii) The ASPERA AGM invitation should go to the departmental heads/deans in the first instance, who, if unable to attend, should nominate the ASPERA delegate and advise this delegate how to represent the institution.

(iii) ASPERA should reconstitute its sub-committees whose work should be the focus of the ASPERA AGM Conference.

(iv) The constitution of ASPERA should be modified to enable the election of ASPERA executive committee members according to ability and not according to the representation of the states. The latter should be considered only if it is relevant to ASPERA functions.

16.5 ASA

The ASA Research Centre was formulated to support the ASPERA community while giving it a strong research impetus and directions. For all the reasons outline in this report it is recommended that the ASA program be implemented as soon as possible.

16.6 Documenting the Sector’s Research Output

16.6.1 Recommendation 1: Assessment Panels

It is recommended that ASPERA reconstitutes its State and National Peer Assessment Committees so that these can begin assessing and moderating creative works submitted to it as publications by research staff and postgraduates.

16.6.2 Recommendation 2: Australian Screen Production Research Index

The index of equivalence between screen production works and convention publications was formulated by the ASPERA AGM Conference in 2005 and was entitled the Australian Screen Production Research Index (ASPRI).² It functions as follows:

- An image-based production will be considered to be refereed if it is endorsed as a refereed publication by a properly established ASPERA Peer Review Committee made up of at least three peers of Lecturer B level (or above).
- In assessing the publication value of creative works submitted to it, an ASPERA Peer Review Committee may consider a range of evidence, including:
  - Written reviews and submission by academic peers.
• Exhibiting at conferences and festivals provides another source of peer assessment. The production value is generally proportional to the importance of the conference and festival in question, namely if it is local, regional, national or international.

• The ASPERA Peer Review Committee will use the following Australian Screen Production Research Index (ASPRI) to evaluate the academic research value of screen-based works:

1. The Australian Screen Production Research Index (ASPRI) will be based on the present (text-based) index of a fully authored book being equal to 5 points.
2. The baseline for ASPRI evaluation will be a one-hour documentary production (having a duration of 52–60 minutes).
3. A one-hour documentary will have the following “authors” and ASPRI points:
   - Creative Producer: 2 points
   - Researcher: 2 points
   - Writer: 2 points
   - Director: 2 points
   - Cinematographer: 2 points
   - Editor: 2 points
   - Special Effects (up to): 2 points
4. Productions that are longer in duration will have the same index as a one-hour documentary.
5. The index for shorter productions will be proportional to their duration (and based on the one-hour documentary points).
6. An exhibition of a student’s significant work will be considered a legitimate publication. Generally speaking, supervisors will be considered as creative producers or executive producers and will correspondingly attract publication value. For example:
   - National Festival: 0.5 ASPRI points for each 10 min. short film
   - Local Festival: 0.25 ASPRI points for each 10 min. short film
7. Award Nominations by the Australian Film Institute provides an appropriate high-end benchmark for production quality in Australia.
8. Major competitive national and international festivals also provide an appropriate high-end benchmark for production quality.
9. For a production to be considered as that of a single author (sole authorship) the author must be the primary project researcher, writer and director of the screen-work.
10. Sole authorship, or multiple production roles, can only attain a maximum of 5 credit points.

It is recommended that this index be implemented with all screen production assessments and that an ASPRI measure be recorded on all documentation of research output.

16.6.3 Recommendation 3: Contextual Statement

It is recommended that each screen production submitted to the State Peer Assessment Committee should be accompanied by a contextual statement up to 1,000 words which addresses the implicit aspects of the production including:

- individual contribution to the production being assessed
- description of the relevant body of work that gave rise to the production
- auto-ethnographic details that are relevant to the reading of the text
- research and theoretical underpinnings of the production
- implied linkages and connections to other texts
- cultural context
- symbolic aspects of the production such as musical intentions
- details of the body of work that could enrich the reading of the production
- auto-ethnographic details that are relevant to the reading of the text.

16.6.4 Recommendation 4: Publication Panels

At the date of writing there are no exhibition or publishing venues that cater solely for screen production works created by academic staff and postgraduates. Accordingly it is recommended that ASPERA State and National Assessment Committees be considered as the publishers of the screen production works in the first instances and that, likewise, members of the State Assessment Committees be considered as the publishing editors/selectors in the first instance.

16.6.5 Recommendation 5: State Moderation

It is recommended that, each year, ASPERA’s State Assessment Committee rank productions submitted to it. The aim of this moderation is to establish developmental, diagnostic and summative assessment in the feedback to the individual screen producers and their respective institutions. A selection of these works that are deemed publishable should be sent to the National Assessment Committee for further moderation.

16.6.6 Recommendation 6: ASPERA’s AGM Festival

It is recommended that ASPERA organise an annual festival of selected works sent to it by the State Assessment Committees. It is further recommended that this festival coincide with the ASPERA AGM Conference.

Notes and References 16

17. Dissemination

17.1 Building upon the network of activities

Disseminating has been intrinsic to this sector-wide collaborative project – it was its defining feature. Dissemination and collaboration will continue thought the established links and through various collaborative activities, including

- Major regional, national and international projects seeded by the state SPARC Committees. Specifically:
  - E-learning (QLD, WA, VIC) – this can potentially involved the whole sector
  - Cultural-Exchanges (WA) in the Indian Ocean
  - Pacific Voices (QLD) for the Pacific Islands’ project
  - Ningaloo Trail (WA)
  - Ethics Project (SA)
  - Screenwriting networks (VIC and NSW). This report will be placed on the project website and will be available to all.

- A range of participants will represent outcomes of this project at the international federation of film schools (CILECT). Consequently, the results will be disseminated to almost every film school in the world. These dissemination activities will include CILECT Conference in 2013, ZIFF/ NASS Conference in 2014, and Durban, South Africa CAPA/CARA CILECT branches Conference in 2015.

- A special issue of IM: Interactive Media refereed e-journal will be produced from the proceedings of the 2013 SPARC Colloquium.

17.2 Establishing ASA

ASA is the ideal vehicle to drive the above activities. The quickest way of getting this Centre established is to start it with a membership of like-minded researchers to work together on a collaborative enterprise. These researchers can then oversee the long process of formally establishing the ASA while applying for collaborative grants that will cement the collaboration.
18. External Assessor’s Report

Developing A Collaborative National Postgraduate Research Education Program for 22 Australian Film Schools:
SCREEN PRODUCTION AND RESEARCH COLLABORATION (SPARC)
ID11-2099

Summative Evaluation Report
Stage 2 Report
23 September 2013

Project Leader and Report Author
Associate Professor Josko Petkovic, and Director
National Academy of Screen and Sound Research Centre
Murdoch University

Project Team
Dr Leo Berkeley and Rachel Wilson
RMIT University

Professor Ian Lang and Annabelle Murphy
Faculty of VCA and Music
The University of Melbourne

Associate Professor Gillian Leahy
University of Technology, Sydney

Professor Herman van Eyken and Nick Oughton
Griffith University

Dr Alison Wotherspoon
Flinders University

In association with National Academy of Screen and Sound Research Centre

Evaluation:
Professor Su Baker
Director,
Victorian College of the Arts
The University of Melbourne
Summative Evaluation Report
Stage 2 Report
23 September 2013

Overview

In preparing this summative and final report for this project I have read the comprehensive reports, both Part A and B and have examined the appendices that indicate the detail of parts of the project, and are substantial components of this study and, along with the full report, represent significant value to the sector.

A number of key events performed as core drivers of this project, and are described in detail in Part 2 of the report. I was fortunate to observe and participate in a number of these events and in each case was impressed by a number of factors, including, the geographical spread, that is, across six states and territories; the inclusion of up to twenty-two Australian universities and higher education providers; the key academic leaders in this field. Similarly, the formats included consultations with key individuals, seminars and colloquia involving groups of state based colleagues, and as strong presence at the national peak body ASPERA’s Annual General Meetings, in July of both years. Significantly, there were two key internationals events, the CAPA conference in Brisbane in November 2012, that involved educational institutions from 60 countries, and the highly successful Postgraduate Research in Screen Production and Creative Art conference in Zanzibar, in June 2013, led by the Western Australian group. The scope and ambition of this project helped to overcome previous limitations of distance and disciplinary diversity.

It was at these events that the most important and lasting work of this project was undertaken, that being building of a community of practice and practitioners and to create a shared vision about the opportunities and capacity for the sector, and the discipline as a whole. These were in some ways realised locally, such as locally formed research groups as in SPARC WA, and NASS, or in Victoria with the newly formed Moving Image Narrative group at VCA, among others. In some cases there was a collective and broader based discussion about the broader strategies for building this capability and this is an ongoing and robust dialogue, with many champions across the field.

At the outset, in preparing this report, it is important to establish some key observations of the aims of this project and to what extent these were achieved.

As stated, in both the application and the final report, the specific aim of this ambitious project was to develop research capacity within the university based screen-producer academic community by developing a collaborative national postgraduate research education, demonstrating the many educational, cultural and commercial benefits and, through this new research community, support a generation of early career researchers and future postgraduate screen production students who can move the sector forward to greater research effectiveness and sustainability.

The method that the project leaders adopted to achieve this was, in part, to propose a number of major structural funding and practice-based research problems that needed to be addressed. These were seen, over time, to be drawing on the research strengths of the state based groups. By thinking in a strategic way this project can be seen as building on existing strengths and creating new alignments for mutual benefit across the sector.

Significantly, as a consequence of this approach, this project initiated sector-wide consultations, evaluating the conditions required for a viable postgraduate research development while liaising with relevant state and federal organisations. By creating such a framework, this was used to form an interim inter-university research centre that actively sought production grants for staff-led collaborative research projects with postgraduate places.
Leading by example, the Western Australian collaborations provided a framework, and it was used to form an interim inter-university research centre. The initial success and current stages of these projects are well articulated in the report, and through that provides some significant exemplars for future action.

Using the strengths of the project leaders as a guide, the project, very productively, built upon the Western Australian experience with intercampus collaboration to map out a synergistic network of national screen production research hubs, regional nodes and local knowledge trails, and in doing this, created a structure to support work on a national level.

The original intercampus collaboration included all WA universities and was led by the following academics: Murdoch (Dr Josko Petrovic), UWA (Professor Geoffrey London), Notre Dame (Ken Kelso), ECU (Dr Leon Marvell) and Curtin (Dr Ken Miller).

More recently, further evidence of inter-campus goodwill is indicated by the correspondence received from Dr Melissa Langdon from The University of Notre Dame, pledging support and enthusiasm for future involvement for work in this area.

To encourage this further development, Murdoch University has nominated Dr Josko Petrovic for the OLT Fellowship Ideas Workshop to take place on 10 October in Melbourne, through which a new phase of the project could emerge.

One of the most outstanding aspects of this project has been the organisational task undertaken in creating a sense of partnership between the 22 Australian screen production institutions and with a range of national and international collaborators. This, in itself, is further evidence of the necessity for a collaborative approach to tackling the structural and cultural limitations and opportunities of this field, both from within the academic sector and to address the systemic impediments in the research management and policy environment.

It was expected that the project would lead to a more directed, sustainable and mix-funded national postgraduate development in screen production, with local and global connections. By creating a strongly motivated community, one that has many voices, a wide range of capacities and capabilities, the project leaders and their partners in this work have created a rich environment from within which to pursue these longer-term goals. This project signals a remarkable advance along this path and has built heightened consciousness and greater levels of ambition and has given encouragement to those who wish to continue this important work. The benefit of creating greater scale and focus through collaboration is made very clear through this report, even through evidence of the impediments, and should be seen as a considerable success.

**Process evaluation: To what extent was the project implemented as planned and funded?**

As can be seen from the final report, the consultation and scholarly engagements with the sector; the creating and nurturing of State-based projects through colloquia and seminars; these and other aspects of community practice building were indeed exemplary. The relative and varied engagement of the various state groups is symptomatic of the variable stages of development in each of these cases. I observed, in my numerous encounters at these colloquia and symposia that there were quite marked differences in the levels of understanding, matters of disciplinary emphasis and strategic sophistication between the 22 partner institutions.

As the project evolved it was deemed necessary to extend what was originally planned to include more consultation visits to build engagement with this diverse group. It seemed that during discussions about the involvement with the peak body ASPERA, some overlap of roles and purpose was experienced and also an indication that as a group there were a number of possible defined strategies, on one hand, it was about the discipline and its development, and on the other, a representative based on advocacy and policy on behalf of the sector. This is a fruitful distinction to make and there is ongoing discussion around these issues.
The survey included as a major part of the project was also significant as an important benchmarking opportunity that created considerable interest. In some cases it confirmed impressions and in others it highlighted issues. Overall, the findings indicated substantial variability in the stages of development of postgraduate education across the sector.

**Outcome evaluation: To what extent did the project accomplish its goals and objectives?**

By the later part of the project, through vigorous discussion and debate, consensus was emerging about the need for a stronger focus and structural cohesion, but with a range of views, not surprisingly, about how to get there becoming apparent. This, in itself is not, in my view, a matter of concern. On the contrary, this indicates a serious investment in the idea of greater collaboration and is rather, in fact, evidence of serious intent. It was, I believe, a function of there being significant institutional differences between the operations of the member groups, which often vary widely, with some having greater academic autonomy, and others greater research strength.

Dr Petkovic, and his team from Murdoch University, in managing this diversity, should be congratulated in achieving such engagement and ‘buy-in’ from colleagues who have traditionally been somewhat individually motivated and conditioned towards competitiveness rather co-operation. This in itself is a remarkable achievement. This team has coordinated a series of colloquia in the five partner states. I attended the Melbourne sessions, and those at Murdoch University. These were always productive discussions and seemed to be relevant to the interests of the researchers in these institutions.

As can be seen in the final report, and through my own observations, these recent discussions have identified evolving research projects and importantly a series of newly formed alliances.

The formal feedback process, as seen in this second part of this project provides a good overview of structural, cultural and funding issues that seem to be impediments to the undertaking of such work and also identifying opportunities for advancing projects in a number of ways. There are examples of successful projects that can stand as models for the future. This has proved to be very valuable information to receive and will impact on the research developments in the sector in useful ways.

One such model is the detailed work done by the WA SPARC group, which, as leaders in this project are not surprisingly, very motivated and well informed about the project, and has provided an excellent model for other states to see and to learn from, especially, over the next phase of the project.

While each state identified a particular focus they are developing in different ways, adding useful diversity to the approaches. However, the peer-to-peer support seems to be having a positive effect, and has stimulated a spirit of collaboration that has not been evident previously.

This is a credit to the project leadership and the persistent vision of a vibrant screen production research community across national and international contexts. I am particularly impressed with the conceptual and pragmatic approach demonstrated through the Indian Ocean Rim Digital Hub project, as it has developed and the exciting developments that were demonstrated through the recent conference in Zanzibar and the current and continuing developments flowing from that event.
**Sustainability evaluation: To what degree has the project made the achievements of the project scalable and sustainable?**

In discussing the ways in which this project has and will impact on the sector and have a long lasting effect, it is important to comment on one area that has been at the core of the project, or at least has formed the core constituency of the group. In the absence of a Learned Academy in the Arts, forms of academic organisation in these fields have, over the past decade or more, taken the form of disciplinary peak bodies. These have had the dual function of being disciplinary groups coming together for scholarly purpose, and also as advocacy groups, involved in establishing appropriate representation in policy and structural discussion in higher education and research evaluation matters. These peak bodies were, for example, called upon to consult on both the recent ERA evaluation process and the OLT’s/ALTC’s Standards projects.

In the case of screen production and the matter of the sector engagement through the peak body Australian Screen Production Education and Research Association (ASPERA), this has been a consolidating and maturing time and one that as involved many of the members in different ways.

Across the sector research in the Creative Arts (that is, in relation to the ERA FoR categories, all those in the 19 Group) academics and their work have been undergoing major challenges and opportunities and this project, SPARC, has spanned a particularly significant time which has seen the evolution of the research ‘consciousness’ in all fields of the creative arts. As has been the case in other disciplinary peak body groups this time has seen some institutional consolidation and some structural realignment. As with a number of other peak bodies, as a consequence of institutional restructures and mergers, the members of ASPERA belong to a wide range of internal organisational structures, that is, some are Departments in Schools, some are Schools within Faculties and Divisions, and many are aligned to other disciplines in some cases, within Humanities structures, and in other cases in the creative arts context.

This reality makes for a cohesive approach to funding graduate student places and scholarships, for example, and managing other research resources, a more complex matter.

However, even from within this complex matrix of organisational modes, by coming together in the forum of this project, there appears to be greater degree of commonality than has often been thought possible. To have an active group such as the participants in this project, provides invaluable collegial support and systemic cohesion.

These are now familiar lessons and the work being done in building co-operation and common ground is a significant credit to Dr Petkovic’s commitment to the project and to the ambition to build a viable and highly regarded research culture in the area of screen production as it is situated in the current higher education and film school settings.

The stated outcome for this was to see an inter-university research centre, a Cooperative Research Centre or another such cohesive structure, that could bring together the valuable prospects of moving image research outcomes, and build the capacity for facilitating a new generation of tele-visual and digitally literate early career researchers and postgraduates.

The stated and ongoing ambition of this SPARC project is of the highest order of importance to this sector and could be of significant benefit to the research communities of many disciplines.

The leaders of this project should be congratulated on the successes of this undertaking, and for the vision for the future that it advances. Enabled by high speed broadband, it is expected that in the future screen-based communication will be even more ubiquitous than it is now and the language of the screen will require greater sophistication in all discipline fields. SPARC has demonstrated the latent capacity in the research sector though its aspiration to set up this future by building research expertise and has identified some significant pathways to achieve this.
Through my continued involvement over these two stages, I have been impressed by the effectiveness of this project. I have been in discussion with Dr Petkovic and his colleagues from the project team over the past two years and longer and have found many occasions for great optimism for the future of the higher education screen production sector. If the findings and learnings from this project can form the basis for further development, then the momentum that it has created will give it every chance for these ambitions to be realised.

I commend this Summative Evaluation to the Office for Learning and Teaching, and I look forward to following the impact of this work felt in the higher education creative arts sector. I would be happy to add further comment should it be necessary.

Professor Su Baker
President of the Australian Council of Deans and Directors of Creative Arts, (DDCA)
Director
Victorian College of the Arts
The University of Melbourne.

23 September 2013
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Developing a collaborative national postgraduate research program for 22 Australian film schools


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Appendix A

SPARC 2012 SURVEY - Scoping Research Activity in the ASPERA Sector

Survey Limitations

- The survey was NOT based on statistical data, in the first instance, but on the information provided by 17 individuals in 17 institutions. It is best to consider the information in this survey as qualitative rather than quantitative. This is consistent with the overarching aim of the survey, namely to be the springboard for further discussions on postgraduate research in the screen production sector.
- The sample is small and is presented as raw data. Confidential data omitted. Only research-based responses included.
- The information provided by informants was based on a somewhat fluid definitions of academic unit/faculty/department – using ASPERA membership definition:

  "Full membership of ASPERA is open to Australian Universities, AFTRS, or academic units within a University (faculty, school, department, institute or college) responsible for the teaching and management of screen production and/or research programs where the central objective is the education and advancement of screen practitioners. A University or academic unit as defined above can join ASPERA if one third of their subjects are production based."

Summary of Survey Participants:

- A number of screen production institutions, from the original sample of 22 institutions, did **not have postgraduate research programs** and did not participate in the survey.
- Several **emerging** screen production institutions that participated in the SPARC meetings had a low level of research and did not participate in the survey.
- 17 institutions contributed to the final Survey

Conclusion on Survey Participation:

The survey captured about 95% of ASPERA member institutions that have an active research program in screen production.

17 Participating Institutions

- University of Canberra
- Curtin University
- Deakin University
- Edith Cowan University
- Flinders University
- Griffith University
- Macquarie University
- The Melbourne University (VCA)
- Murdoch University
- The University of Newcastle
- The University of Notre Dame Australia
- Queensland University of Technology (QUT)
- RMIT University
- The University of New South Wales (COFA)
- University of Tasmania
- University of Technology, Sydney (UTS)
- The University of Western Sydney
Number of participating institutions by State/Territory

NSW
1. Macquarie University
2. Newcastle University
3. The University of New South Wales (COFA)
4. University of Technology Sydney
5. University of Western Sydney

Western Australia
1. Curtin University
2. Edith Cowan University
3. Murdoch University
4. The University of Notre Dame Australia

Victoria
1. Deakin University
2. The Melbourne University (VCA)
3. RMIT University

Queensland
1. Griffith University
2. Queensland University of Technology

ACT
1. University of Canberra

South Australia
1. Flinders University

Tasmania
1. University of Tasmania

Q7 What is the preferred entry qualification for PhD candidates in screen production within your academic unit?

Honours
Hons or equivalent
Hons or MA (Research) or MA by coursework that including substantial research component
Honours (Australian) or MA Hons
Hons 1 MA (research)
Honours degree or MA Media Production by coursework by in that case less likely to get a scholarship
Honours 1 Class
Honours BCA or BA in Screen Production
PhD
Honours degree or Masters
BA Hons Honours, predicted to be Masters within five years
Honours Honours or MPhil and convert to PhD
Honours or Masters degree
Honours Masters by Research or
Honours or Master of Research

Comment: Entry requirements for postgraduate program seem quite consistent for all universities.

Q8 Is the overall academic emphasis of your academic unit is: (tick one only)

Predominantly on undergraduate teaching 59%
(more than 70%)
Mixture of undergraduate and postgraduate coursework teaching and research 41%

Predominantly on postgraduate coursework (more than 70%) 0%

Postgraduate coursework and research 0%

Comment: The responses to this question give a good profile of the research activity in the sector. The responses suggest that 59% of institutions have screen production programs that are essentially teach-only academic units – probably with individual researchers working in them. The responses suggest that 41% of institutions have a more substantial research program.

Q9 The overall activity of your academic unit is best described as: (Select one option only)

Screen Production 4
Media Arts 4
Creative Arts 4
Film and TV School 2
Media, Communication and Culture 1
Journalism and Public Relations 1
Content Production 1
Creative Industries 0
Fine Arts 0
Electronic Art 0
Experimental Design 0
Interactive Design 0
Games Design 0
Web Design 0
Creative Writing 0
Ethnography 0
Internet Communication 0
New Media Practice 0
Multimedia 0
Immersive Technologies 0
Computer Generated Effects 0
Animation (2&3D) 0

Comment: The positive responses suggest a similar cohort of students:

Screen Production 4
Media Arts 4
Creative Arts 4
Film and TV School 2
Media, Communication and Culture 1
Journalism and Public Relations 1
Content Production 1

Comment: The negative responses below indicate no shift of primary institutional focus towards the following disciplines:

Creative Industries 0
Fine Arts 0
Electronic Art 0
Experimental Design 0
## Q10 Are there any other important descriptors you consider to be integral to your academic unit? Select up to 3 only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screen Production</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media, Communication and Culture</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film and TV School</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animation (2&amp;3D)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Arts</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Production</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Arts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism and Public Relations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Industries</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Media Practice</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Design</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games Design</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web Design</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Communication</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immersive Technologies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Art</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Design</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnography</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multimedia</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Generated Effects</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comment:** The three responses in this question broaden the important descriptor of the academic units surveyed to include:

- Animation (2&3D)
- Creative Industries
- New Media Practice
- Interactive Design
- Games Design
- Web Design
- Internet Communication
- Immersive Technologies

**Comment:** Adding Q9 and Q10 and normalizing gives a better spectrum of overall activities.
The combined questions can be expressed as follows:

**Q10 + Q9  What are the most important descriptors of your academic unit?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Unit</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screen Production</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Arts</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Arts</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film and TV School</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media, Communication and Culture</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism and Public Relations</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Production</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animation (2&amp;3D)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Industries</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Media Practice</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Design</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games Design</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web Design</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Communication</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immersive Technologies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Art</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Design</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnography</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multimedia</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Generated Effects</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comment:** These responses suggest a similar cohort of students for the 17 institutions in the survey.

**Q11  What are the most relevant activities within the curriculum of your screen production academic unit? Please select up to 5 only.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production of creative works</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scriptwriting and creative writing</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinematography</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direction</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual studies in Media, Comm. &amp; Culture</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative producing and project incubation</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editing and post-production</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional pre-production research</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound design</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Generated Effects (CGI)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution, Public Relations and Marketing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art design</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical composition</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibiting, curating and presenting</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web design</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts administration project management</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comment:** A more insightful presentation of Q11 responses is as a production sequences:

- **pre-production**
- **production**
- **post-production**
Q11  What are the most relevant activities within the curriculum of your screen production academic unit? Please select up to 5 only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creative producing and project incubation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts administration project management</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual studies in Media, Comm. &amp; Culture</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional pre-production research</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scriptwriting and creative writing</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production of creative works</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinematography</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direction</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound design</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art design</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editing and post-production</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Generated Effects (CGI)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical composition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution, Public Relations and Marketing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibiting, curating and presenting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web design</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comment:** The above production sequence gives the following distribution of activities

- pre-production 39%
- production 45%
- post-production 16%

Although the third stage of production is as important as the first two, students often see it as secondary if only because they are preoccupies with pre-production and production activities and run short of time.
Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA)

Q12  What ERA categories are there in your principle research-based academic unit?

19 Studies in Creative Arts and Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901 Art Theory and Criticism</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902 Film, Television and Digital Media</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903 Journalism and Professional Writing</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904 Performing Arts and Creative Writing</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905 Visual Arts and Crafts</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 Other Studies in Creative Arts and Writing</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment: These are all complementary ERA categories and expected in a screen production sector.

Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA)

Q13  What ERA categories are there in your principle research-based academic unit?

20 Language, Communication and Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001 Communication and Media Studies</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 Cultural Studies</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 Language Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 Linguistics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 Literary Studies</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2099 Other Language, Communication and Culture</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment: These ERA responses are quite predictable for the sector that specializes in packaging cultural and media messages and communicating these to audiences.
Q14 How many current F/T (academic) screen production staff are there in your academic unit?

Comment: Altogether there were 94 F/T screen production staff in 17 universities.
Q15  How many current P/T (academic) screen production staff are there in your academic unit?

Comment:  Altogether there were 90 P/T screen production staff in the 17 universities.
Comment: Combining questions 14 and 15 brings out an interesting feature regarding the staff employment profile.

**Current Screen Production Staff Profile: F/T (blue) + P/T (red) (Q14 + Q15)**

![Bar chart showing screen production staff profile by university code]

Comment: Altogether there were 184 F/T + P/T screen production staff in 17 universities. Teaching with P/T staff is less expensive than teaching with F/T staff. For this reason institutions often use P/T teaching staff to subside research by F/T staff. This may be the case for institutions 2, 6 and 10 as these have a higher number of P/T staff working for them.
Comment: The survey questions 16-18 asked informants to record the actual names of their full-time and part-time staff as well as their qualifications. These names cannot be published here. It is appropriate to assume that the informants did not know names of all the staff and P/T staff in particular. Thus the charts below should be used with caution and only as a broad approximation of the sector. For example Q14 and Q15 in the survey, which asked the respondents to simple give the number of full-time and part-time staff, indicated a somewhat higher number, namely 94 F/T staff and 90 P/T staff. These numbers should also be used cautiously.

FULL-TIME/ PART-TIME STAFF PROFILE

QUALIFICATIONS OF ALL STAFF

QUALIFICATION OF FULL-TIME STAFF
Comment: Most university disciplines have a high number of staff with PhD qualifications – often 90% and more. This is clearly not the case with screen production sector. Only 35% have PhD qualification. It is also evident that a high number (40%) of F/T of staff attempting to upgrade their qualification.

Q19. How many research-active screen production staff did you have in the last ERA assessment?

Comment: Altogether there were 54 research-active screen production staff in the survey sector.
Q20   How many of these were primarily practice-based research active?

![Bar Chart]

Comment: Altogether there were 41 research-active screen practice-based researchers in the 17 universities.
Comment: Combining questions 19 and 20 compares practice-based research-active and conventional research-active staff.

Current research active and practice-based research active staff Q19 - Q20

Comment: Altogether there were 54 research-active screen practice-based researchers in the 17 universities. Of these research-active screen production staff 13 were not practice-based researchers.
Q23 + Q24  
F/T staff PhD completions in the last three years
Practice-based (blue) and conventional (red)

Comment: In the last three years the F/T staff had 11 practice-based PhD completions and 5 conventional PhD completions.
(Q25 + Q26)  F/T staff MA (Research) completions in the last 3 years
Practice-based (blue) and conventional (red)

**Comment:** In the last three years the F/T staff had 4 practice-based MA (research) completions and 4 conventional MA (research) completions.
Q27 & Q28  Number of postdoctoral positions applied (blue) and received (red) in past 3 years

![Bar chart showing University Code (1-17) with applied and received positions]

**Comment:** In the last three years the sector applied for 6 postdoctoral positions and successfully received 2.
Q29  How many active F/T PhD postgraduates do you currently have?

Comment:  The sector presently has 64 F/T PhD postgraduates.
Q30  How many active F/T DCA postgraduates do you currently have?

![Bar chart showing the number of active F/T DCA postgraduates by university code.]

**Comment:** The sector presently has 19 F/T DCA postgraduates in only four institutions.
Q31  How many active F/T MA (Research) postgraduates do you currently have?

Comment:  The sector presently has 63 F/T MA (research) postgraduates – most in University 2.
Q32  How many active P/T PhD postgraduates do you currently have?

Comment:  The sector presently has 22 P/T PhD postgraduates.
Q33 How many active P/T DCA postgraduates do you currently have?

Comment: The sector presently has 17 P/T DCA postgraduates in only 3 institutions.
Q34  How many active P/T MA (Research) postgraduates do you currently have?

Comment: The sector presently has 18 P/T MA (research) postgraduates.
Comment: The sector presently has 86 PhD postgraduates in total made up of 64 F/T (blue) and 22 P/T (red) PhD postgraduates. What is also interesting to note is that some institutions only have F/T postgraduates. PhD postgraduates often start as F/T students and tend to go P/T in the later stages of candidatures. The chart suggests that institution 2 and 3 may have emerging PhD programs only recently started.
Comment: The sector presently 36 DCA postgraduates in total made up of 19 F/T (blue) and 17 P/T (red) DCA postgraduates in only 4 universities.
Q31 +Q34: Total MA (Research) Postgraduates (F/T (blue) + P/T (red))

Comment: The sector presently has 81 MA (research) postgraduates in total, made up of 63 F/T (blue) and 18 P/T (red) MA (research) postgraduates. However the distribution of these students is very uneven with most students in Institutions 2. Institution 2 also has no P/T candidates indicating recent MA (research) program.
Q29 + Q30 + Q31:
Full time postgraduate numbers PhD (blue), DCA (red), MA (green)

The sector presently has 146 F/T research postgraduates in total, made up of 64 PhD (blue), 17 DCA (red) and 63 MA (research) (green) postgraduates. The distribution of these students is very uneven with most students in institutions 2. Many institutions have only a few if any F/T postgraduate research students.
Comment: The sector presently has 57 research P/T postgraduates in total, made up of 22 PhD (blue), 17 DCA (red) and 18 MA (research) (green) postgraduates. However the distribution of these students is very uneven.
Comment: The sector presently has 203 research postgraduates in total, made up of the following students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FULL TIME STUDENTS</th>
<th>PART-TIME STUDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64 PhD (blue)</td>
<td>22 PhD (mauve)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 DCA (red)</td>
<td>17 DCA (turquoise)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63 MA (research) (green)</td>
<td>18 MA (research) (orange)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The distribution of these students is uneven with most students found in only a few institutions.
Q35  How many PhD coursework students do you currently have?

Comment: There are 26 Professional Doctorates (by coursework) in the sector and all in one university. This is not a PhD program.
All postgraduates (PhD, DCA, MA) and PhD (Coursework)

Comment: There are 229 research postgraduates in total (F/T and P/T) including attending PhD, DCA, Professional Doctorate and MA (Research) programs. The most interesting feature about these numbers is their uneven distribution.
Q37 How many Honours students do you currently have?

![Bar chart showing the number of Honours students per university code]

**Comment:** There are 103 honours students in the sector according to the survey. A strong Honours program often reflects a strong program that will in time develop a good postgraduate research stream.
Q38  How many of your current screen production PhD candidates have scholarships?

Comment: There are in total 31 PhD scholarships. Scholarship usually indicate that the postgraduate is a F/T student who has commenced the program in the last 3-4 years.
Q39  How many of these scholarships are internal to your institution?

Comment: There are 14 internal scholarships in the sector. Internal scholarship may indicate institutional support for the screen production program.
Q40 How many of these scholarships are external to your institution (i.e. Australian Postgraduate Awards)?

Comment: There are 20 postgraduates with external scholarships in the sector according to the survey. Postgraduates with external scholarships may indicated high quality students.
Internal (blue) and External (red) PhD Scholarships
Q39 + Q40

Comment: There are 34 PhD scholarships (internal and external) in the sector. The high number of external scholarships in Institution 2 and no internal scholarships suggest a high quality program with quality postgraduates
Q41  How many of your current MA (Research) candidates have scholarships?

**Comment:** There are 13 MA (Research) scholarships in the sector. MA (Research) scholarship tend to be unusual. The presence of 12 such scholarship in institutions 2 suggests a strong research program in university 2.
Q42  How many PhD completions, in total (including staff listed in Q19) have you had in the last 3 years?

**Comment:** There are 47 completions in the sector in the last three years (including staff listed in Q19). Uneven distribution most probably reflect research active and research inactive universities.
Q43. How many MA (Research) completions, in total (including staff listed at Q20) have you had in last 3 years?

Comment: There are 55 MA (Research) completions in the sector (including staff listed in Q20). Uneven distribution suggests research active and inactive institutions.
Q44  How many PhD completions within your institution in the last 3 years had internal funding?

Please indicate the number of completions within each funding range below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Grants no</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$ 1,000 - $4,999</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 5,000 - $10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>$10,000 - $50,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>$99,000 +</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comment:** Completions with large internal ($50,000) grants suggests an efficient and committed research programs.
Q45  How many PhD completions within your institution in the last 3 years had external funding?

Please indicate the number of completions within each funding range below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Amount</th>
<th>Total Number of Grants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$  1,000 - $4,999</td>
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<td>$  5,000 - $10,000</td>
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<td>$99,000 +</td>
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</table>

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Comment: Completions with large internal ($50,000) grants suggests an efficient and committed research programs.
Q46 How many major (non-practice) competitive grants ($100,000+) do you currently host?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Grants no</th>
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<tr>
<td>CRC (DIISR)</td>
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<td>State Grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARC Centre of Excellence</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARC Linkage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large ARC Discovery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large ALTC</td>
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Comment: Institutions with large competitive (non-practice) grants suggests efficient and committed research programs but not necessarily practice-based programs.
Q47  How many practice-based research grants ($100,000+) do you currently host?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Grants no</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRC (DIISR)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Grants</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARC Centre of Excellence</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARC Linkage</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large ARC Discovery</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large ALTC</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Comment: Institutions with large competitive practice-based grants suggests efficient and committed research programs, arguably on the cutting edge.
Q48  Major Corporate Grants: How many practice-based corporate research grants do you currently host?

![Bar chart showing the number of major corporate grants hosted by different universities.]

**Comment:** Only two grants at only one institution is surprisingly small for a significant sector.
Q49  How many minor practice-based research grants do you currently host?

Comment: Small grants and small numbers – surprisingly small.
Q50  How many minor practice-based corporate research grants do you currently host?

Comment: Small grants and small numbers – surprisingly small.
Q51  How many scripts produced by your staff and/or students in the last five years have been taken up by industry to be made into:

- Feature films: 7
- Broadcast television documentaries: 13
- Other free-to-air broadcasts: 11
- Major websites: 7

Comment: These outputs could serve as a good stepping stone for more production outputs.
**Q52** How do you rate the practice-based research profile of your academic unit?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World class and on the cutting edge</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better than most of our Australian colleagues</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As good as most of our colleagues</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good but undertaken by a minority of staff</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struggling to maintain some practice-based research</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardly any real practice-based research is undertaken</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Comment:* This seems like an optimistic outlook.

**Q53** In your opinion who does the **most practice-based research** in your academic unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Staff working on their own practice-based projects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Staff completing PhD programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Staff supervising postgraduate candidates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Staff working on projects for colleagues from other disciplines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Postdoctoral fellows working on original practice-based projects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q54** Please indicate what you consider the level of funding for the practice-based postgraduates in your academic unit to be:

- Untenable for most practice-based projects 50.0%
- Insufficient but manageable with various restrictions 43.75%
- Adequate 6.25%

**Q55** The prospects of maintaining a healthy postgraduate development in your academic unit are:

- 5.9%
- Very poor 17.6%
- Poor 11.8%
- Average 47.1%
- Very Good 11.8%
- Excellent 5.9%

**Q56** The prospects of maintaining a healthy postgraduate development in the ASPERA sector are:

- 17.6%
- Very poor 17.6%
- Poor 11.8%
- Average 35.3
- Very Good 11.8%
- Excellent 5.9%

*Comment:* The responses to Q53-Q56 are not surprising and are somewhat pessimistic.

**Q57** For the ASPERA sector to improve its postgraduate research capacity the best strategies for the sector are to improve its links with:

(Please select up to 5 only)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Contacted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Research Council (ARC)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local screen production industry</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Broadcasters (ABC, SBS etc)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASPERA members and institutions</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Arts Council (OzCo)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIISR i.e. Cooperative Research Centres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humanities Departments</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media, Communication and Culture</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive and Games Design Departments</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival Organizations (Libraries, Museums)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local community and Shires</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immersive Technologies and 3D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journalism &amp; PR Departments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education Departments</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Studies</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search engine providers (i.e. Google)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet &amp; Web Departments</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Science</td>
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<td>Genome Studies</td>
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<td>Defense Departments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychology Departments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complex Systems and Artificial Intelligence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer Science</td>
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**Comment:** The above responses are broadly as expected.

Q58 **The most important funding sources for postgraduate research in the ASPERA sector are:**
(Tick all that you are likely to contact in coming years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Contacted</th>
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<td>Australian Research Council (ARC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian Arts Council (OzCo)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local screen production industry</td>
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<td>Corporate Sector</td>
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<td>Philanthropic Foundations</td>
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<td>Local community and Shires</td>
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<td>Museums</td>
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<td>Local Broadcasters (ABC, SBS etc)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIISR i.e. Cooperative Research Centres</td>
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<td>Defence Department</td>
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<td>Archival Organizations (Libraries)</td>
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<td>Search engine providers (i.e. Google)</td>
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</table>

**Comment:** The above responses are broadly as expected.
Appendix B

E-Learning Advances in Australia

Journal of Distance Education In China (2013)
By Ian Lang
Curriculum Designer: Reality Learning Ltd (Australia and China).
Website source: <professorlang.com/content/e-learning-advances-australia>
Professor Lang website: <professorlang.com>

Context (Simplified-English version).
Australia has a 100-year history in distance learning to develop worker skills across a big country with a small population. Today the rising new economy of China and Australia is placing big demands on traditional schools and technical colleges to provide enough new smart-workers. Enterprises are starting to take over some training functions also. With less workers to support a population growing older, it makes sense to the Australian government and business to invest in eLearning.

From the USA and Australia, recent survey show that even with MOOCs, and Coursera, the university sector is not graduating enough workers with skills that employers need. However teachers and professors at schools and universities already have high workloads, and some are resistant to developing extra on-line courses as well as traditional face-to-face delivery. The eLearning solutions that developed from world-leading work in the UK and Australia in the 1990s were a good start, but not standardized. So a student moving from school to work may experience different interfaces, and content delivery methods. This duplication did not help learning efficiency.

Flexible Learning Framework – a national solution
To overcome this the Australian government has in the last few years developed a Flexible Learning Framework for the whole country. It aims to provide national standards to eLearning, and some funds for business and educators to build content and delivery systems that deliver better learning for less money.

We can already see some big steps forward. Teachers are more comfortable with designing their material for eLearning. Student scores and retention are going up as better teaching and assessment methods are shared between providers.

Competing universities use eLearning to attract the best students, in ways that sometimes prevents cooperation between them to modernize and standardise the whole system methodically and provide a seamless education process between school and work, wherever students study.

Are Universities Finished?
Some radical voices suggest that there will be a big change to the number of universities in the Western countries in ten years. The evidence of history does not support this though. We can see a healthy future for both universities and technical education, if they cooperate with employers to help graduates get jobs.

So in Australia, we see most advances in the technical training area for eLearning, with more discussion with employers to find out what they need. Government surveys predict our workforce needs retraining often in their career to cope with increased industry restructuring and movement from low value-add primary production and simple service delivery to higher value-add knowledge creation sectors. In China and Australia the challenge now is to not to convince the world that eLearning is useful. The job is to make eLearning content do its job better.
The Flexible Learning Framework is having special success in doing this through improving delivery methods, combined with much greater reach and speeds through Australia’s National Broadband Network (NBN) that is being constructed now, and is currently the largest infrastructure program in the country costing around USD$45 billion.

To achieve wide success, every student taking an eLearning course needs to see the clear economic benefit for themselves. If only one student complains on social media that their eLearning course is not productive, everyone will know, and that is not helpful. Through careful listening to our students who in some ways are also our employers, we can provide the materials they need.

Latest Trends
Generally the trends from government surveys to inform the Flexible Learning Framework show:
- Students want more individual feedback from teachers to improve scores.
- Students want to use mobile learning for phone so the interface should be fast and simple.
- Students want to develop an “eLearning portfolio” of their results from all education courses, so that employers can see exactly what the student has achieved.
- Employers and students want eLearning systems that are being continuously updated to reflect latest sources, case-studies, and government policies.

What are the eLearning platforms that big Australian universities use?
- The University of Melbourne: MOOCS/Coursera.
- The University of Western Australia (UWA): Stanford’s Class2Go software to offer courses.
- University of Southern Queensland (USQ): OERUniversity (virtual consortium).
- Macquarie University: Learning Activity Management Systems already being used in China and Japan.
- The University of New South Wales: Smart Sparrow spin-off, uses Adaptive eLearning Platform in science and medical education.
- University of New England: UNE Open initiative.
- Deakin University: Set to launch a MOOC next month.
- The University of New South Wales (UNSW): Introductory computing course via its OpenLearning platform.

Already around a third of university students do some eLearning in their degrees, especially in the sciences, languages, engineering and business. The statistics vary widely between universities.

Traditional Tier One providers tend to rely on traditional teaching more, but are starting to use eLearning techniques for innovative research.

New Tier-Two universities in regional areas like USQ are better at providing integrated eLearning into standard teaching.

Technical Education Leads Modernisation
Perhaps the most advances happen in technical training for vocational education (VET-Vocational Education and Training).

A 2011 survey by the Australian Government’s Flexible Learning Framework found that two thirds of VET students used interactive learning resources on site (at their training provider) as well as offsite (at home, at work, away from training provider’s premises).
Around 40% of students have experienced eLearning through the use of web-based seminars/presentations (e.g. Elluminate), virtual classroom environments (e.g. Moodle) or web 2.0 technologies (e.g. blogs, wikis).

Use of other technologies is less common, with a third to a quarter of students using voice (e.g. podcasting, recording) or mobile phones, eportfolios (e.g. Mahara) or social networking (e.g. Facebook, Twitter).

The VET student feedback is improving for eLearning. The impact of eLearning on employment outcomes is at its highest recorded level.

Around sixty per cent of VET students report that their eLearning experience has increased their skills and confidence in using technology.

Fifty-five per cent of students said eLearning helps them to do their current job better. Forty-two per cent said it helped them to get a better job, and sixty-six per cent said that they expected improved employment outcomes in the future as a result of the eLearning in their course.

To help explain these results, the President of The University of Technology, Sydney (UTS), Shirley Alexander, says in a 2011 report in The Australian newspaper by John Ross, that: “One of the major roles of a teacher now is to design learning experiences. You can have e-learning experiences that are engaging and attractive, and students learn a lot from them. And you can have very poor e-learning experiences where [they’re] just put in front of an automated face-to-face system – lectures and textbooks on screen, and so on.”

Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) that provide commercial training but are not formal universities, are developing a stronger role under the Flexible Training Framework. They show willingness to share new Learning Management Systems (LMS) and content delivery platforms cooperatively, and are faster to respond to employer demands for graduate standards.

In some ways, we can say that in eLearning, Australia’s biggest advance may be in producing higher quality graduates. This is the first objective. To standardise the eLearning platforms is just the tool to do this.

Smaller eLearning providers and RTOs can be more flexible sometimes than big providers.

**Small and Medium Advantages**

One company I work with, Reality Learning for example, specialises in working with Chinese hospitals for health training in twenty-four provinces. It uses experience from developing online courses for Australian hospitals and not-for-profits, to build interactive scenarios to create greater learner motivation and more feedback.

The innovation feature is updating real-life feedback into the scenario so it is always fresh – an example of formative evaluation that does not rely simply on quizzes and tutors.

Sydney University is also providing successful eLearning programs for the Guandong Womens and Childrens Hospital.

Both Reality Learning and Sydney University demonstrate specialised skills in cross-cultural applications, developed from working with people who come from many countries to live in Australia.

To help RTOs and VET education providers use eLearning better, the Flexible Learning Framework recommends the use of a S.M.A.R.T. approach. This makes sense in English better than Chinese, but the main thing is to be precise in writing down the learning outcomes so they can be measured.
Developing a collaborative national postgraduate research program for 22 Australian film schools

SMART
- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Time-framed

Bad example

“The hospital team will reduce the waiting time of patients”. This is too general, too big and impossible to measure.

Good example

“The hospital team will reduce the waiting time of patients in the emergency room at Central Hospital by 15% by 30th June 2013.”

This is precise, and helps managers, content makers and learners know what to do by a certain date.

Assessment
RTOs are also developing better ways to assess eLearning. This includes three different methods used in each learning package.
- Diagnostic assessment: immediate feedback to help learner
- Formative assessment: feedback to help course designer
- Summative assessment: evidence of learner achievement for employers

In Australia, these approaches and other reforms aim to help the VET sector in Australia:

"to improve teacher quality (including altering the teacher classification structure to recognise the demands placed on VET teachers), guaranteed funding for the duration of the plan at 4% of GDP, construction of a digital education system and improved online teaching esources, and improved accountability for the administration of the education system."

This sort of approach is useful to China’s National Outline for Medium and Long Term Educational Reform and Development (2010-2020) to build model schools and field training bases - 50 demonstration technician colleges, 200 demonstration senior secondary technical schools, 500 demonstration regular technical schools and 100 demonstration public training bases.

Through shared communication between content makers and clients, there are many ways that the long partnership between China and Australia can help both countries develop prosperous smart economies with better lives for all workers, not just students.

Useful Links and References
Australian Flexible Learning Framework (2010) 2010 VET teacher/trainer results, DEEWR, Canberra,
<elearningindicators.flexiblelearning.net.au/docs/10results/2010_T... > [Australia]


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Appendix C

PACIFIC VOICES: Screen Industries and Culture in the Pacific

Nicholas Oughton and Margaret McVeigh

“If your story’s important you’ve got to tell it yourself”
Kevin Lucas (Producer) One Night the Moon (2001)
Brisbane International Film Festival, 4 August 2001

This paper addresses the question: ‘What educational research, frameworks and learnings can best capture and enhance indigenous voices, story telling and cultural signatures through the agency of film and screen media in a Pacific community context?’

Purpose
The paper investigates matters relating to the above question. While not providing a defined framework for action, it does bring into focus some factors for consideration in any future program of cooperation with the Pacific Islands to assist them in building screen industries, screen education and screen culture.

The Context
The verbal, visual and cultural landscape of the Pacific Ocean, its Islands and people are supremely rich, varied and complex, with a diversity of Polynesian and Melanesian traditions and art, mixed with European and Asian influences. There have been a number of undertakings and projects to conserve, appraise and build narratives around this cultural abundance and heritage. The following are examples.

The Third UNESCO World Heritage Global Strategy meeting held in Suva, Fiji recognized the inseparable connection between the outstanding seascapes and landscapes of the Pacific Islands region and the rich histories, oral and life traditions of the Pacific Island peoples. The meeting focused on five themes including: places of origin, mythological origin and navigation routes; cultural objects and artifacts, archaeological and historical sites of human settlements; places of traditional economic and ceremonial exchange and; from the past to present, continuity and change in the Pacific region.

The Pacific Island’s Forum is an association comprising sixteen countries with the collective goal to stimulate economic growth and enhance political governance and security in Oceania. In 2012, the Forum Secretariat held a workshop in Suva, Fiji as part of a broader project to develop cultural industries in the Pacific. The workshop recognised the value of cultural assets and looked at ways that these assets could be monetised for the economic development of the region.

The Pacific Partnerships for Development scheme, an AusAid program sponsored by the Australian Government is committed to an engagement with Pacific island partners to:

• improve economic structure and enhance local employment possibilities through infrastructure and broad-based economic growth;
• enhance private sector development, including better access to microfinance;
• achieve quality universal basic education;
• improve health outcomes through better access to basic health services;
• enhance governance, including the role of civil society, and the role of non-government organizations in basic service delivery.

The highly acclaimed Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT) provides a three-yearly, up-to-date view of Pacific art and culture. APT is the only major exhibition series focused exclusively on the art of Asia, the Pacific and Australia. It embraces: ‘A unique focus on the contemporary art...publications, academic papers and public programs [that] contribute to critical scholarship and research into art of the region’.


CILECT (Centre International De Liaison Des Ecoles De Cinema et De Television) is the association of the world’s major film and television schools. Its goals are to provide a means for the exchange of ideas among member schools, and to help them understand the future of education for creative personnel in film, television, and related media. In November 2012, CAPA, the Asia-Pacific chapter of CILECT, held a conference in Brisbane, Australia that considered how CAPA could assist pacific nations build education and training programs to enhance their capacity to develop screen culture, screen education and screen industries.

The prestigious, annual Asia Pacific Screen Awards (APSAs) broadcast to more than 46 countries across the Asia Pacific on Sunday, January 6th 2013 promotes and acclaims cinematic excellence and the cultural diversity of the vast Asia-Pacific region. The APSA awards are an international initiative that bring together in a unique collaboration, UNESCO and the International Federation of Film Producers Associations.

An event with a distinctive Oceanic note is the Pacific International Documentary Film Festival, an annual event held in Tahiti. The goals of this festival are to: bring together film and television professionals of the region; foster the development of joint projects; facilitate information exchange on current topics and; create a market between Pacific documentary producers and world documentary buyers.

These organizations and events have encouraged development in many aspects of Pacific Island culture. For example: UNESCO’s Global Heritage strategy has encouraged nine Pacific Island States to submit lists of potential World Heritage properties that reflect the regional identity and local diversity of their communities. Meanwhile, the Seventh APT (2013) drew record attendance and participation. But, while some areas of Pacific culture are moving forward, the screen culture and the film and television industries of the region are lagging.

Some initiatives have occurred, however, such as training courses conducted in Fiji by Griffith University and Queensland University of Technology. In Australia, Pacific Islanders have begun to tell their story through film. Story Weaver program participants claim that “Pacific Islanders (PI) have been telling awesome, unique stories for as long as anyone can remember. Now we want to take more of our stories to the screen”. Story Weavers is a hands-on filmmaking project for young Melbourne, Pacific Islanders exploring PI identity in urban Australia, while working with professional filmmakers to develop, shoot and screen short films. In addition, a number of very interesting projects have been conducted in the Pacific region by the Makassar SEAscreen Academy, the Faculty of Arts – University of Auckland and New York Universities’ Tish Asia, Film School. These projects are examined later in this paper.

The Screen Culture and Screen Industry in the Pacific

The APSAs are an annual barometer of health for the Film and Television industries in the Asia-Pacific region. Over six years of these awards, there has been scant participation by Pacific nations, and a Pacific ‘Island’ nation (excluding Australia) has yet to win an APSA award. Regarding the 2012 APSA Festival, filmmaker and educator Vilsoni Hereniko noted: “there wasn’t a single film or filmmaker from the Pacific that was part of the proceedings”. 

At the recent CAPA conference (Brisbane, 2012), Dr Shushi Kathari noted that: “Apart from the Academy of Creative Media in University of Hawaii, there are no films schools in the Pacific Islands. There are also no dedicated screen production degrees, nor any structured courses that offer opportunities to learn film and video production. These are cultures rife with a long history of oral storytelling and performance, but their screen representation remains marginal”.

Dr Kathari proposes that there is “minimal self representation and archiving by Pacifica people, in charge of their own ‘voice’ and in control of their own image”. A number of factors have caused this circumstance she proposes including:

- A lack of infrastructure, human and technical resources
- A lack of cultural imperative that deems such stories worthy of recording;
A complacency (in some cases) as storytelling and traditions are passed down from one generation to another in traditional forms.

We believe that any discussion regarding the development of prospective training programs for existing and aspiring Pacific Island filmmakers should be preceded by an investigation into the nature of ‘voice’ within a Pacific Island context. Thus, and with Dr Kathari’s thoughts in mind, this paper will consider the nature of ‘Voice’ in general, and the Pacifica ‘Voice’ in particular.

The Importance of a Film Voice
Film has an important role to play as a cultural, industrial and political artifact. The visual language of cinema and the screen can transcend linguistic and cultural barriers through the medium of visual story and universal meanings. This idea is ably crystallized in the words of Phillip Cheah in *When Strangers Meet*, when he discusses the importance of both maintaining and translating the local and the global on the screen in an Indonesian context:

“But what is it like to be Indonesian?” He asked. ‘Trying to express identity in a country of so many islands, regions, languages and ethnic groups is difficult. Film can let us discover what it’s really like. Listening to sobbing is being Indonesian. The human face is the face of our archipelago. See the face and you understand the family”.  

As filmmakers and film academics, we understand and study the power and ability of cinema to capture and project the ‘universal’ in the ‘local’. We know that cinema can reach out to people across geographical, social, economic, gender, and ethnic boundaries to crystallize the essential meanings of life, the imperatives of global citizenship as well as the sovereignty of singularity.

Cinema can also bring about enlightenment and changes in knowledge about, attitudes to, and behaviors towards our neighbors near and far. We know that cinema can play a vital role in showcasing cultural diversity, forging links across national borders and providing a working arena for filmmakers. Film enables peoples to speak across cultures. “Visual images, in their transcultural properties, may have a particular capacity to represent continuities across apparently radically dissimilar global settings”.  

But, as filmmakers and teachers, what do we know about the concept of ‘voice’ itself and its authenticity to the person doing the speaking? — What do we know about how Pacific filmmakers have done, or will tell their stories, and how will answers to these questions enable us to assist Pacific Island nations share their stories with the rest of the world?

Telling Stories My Uncles and Aunties Would be Proud Of
For us, a most important issue for consideration when discussing the potential training of future Pacific Island filmmakers is the concept of authorial ‘voice’. ‘Voice’ can be conceptualised in a number of ways including the idea that the ‘voice’ is a genuine and authentic expression of the storyteller of a particular country or culture; and the idea that ‘voice’ is a cultural memory, like the spoken or unspoken ideas and thoughts of a culture enshrined in the stories and artistic traditions of that culture or that voice.

The concept of voice as the genuine or authentic ‘voice’ of particular national storyteller was discussed at the 2012 Brisbane Writers Festival when two international authors - Joanne Harris, the English author of the novel, *Chocolat* set in France and Witi Ihimaera the Maori author of New Zealand novel, *The Whale Rider*, when they spoke of the process of seeing their successful novels adapted for film — for a worldwide audience in a medium that has the potential to translate or change the essence of the story through cinematic adaptation.

Witi Ihimaera’s *The Whale Rider* recounts the story of an eight-year old girl who wants to become a whale rider against the patriarchal traditions of her tribe. In the adaptation of his book Witi was concerned that the film would lose its “Maoiriness”. His solution was to
become the Executive Producer of his film and maintain control of all aspects of the story, in his own words, so that he could make a film “that he could show his uncles and aunts”, a film that they would be proud of.

At the other end of the scale is the tale of the adaptation for screen of Joanne Harris’s *Chocolat*. In essence, Harris acknowledged that even though she was happy with how the film turned out and had signed away her rights to creative control of the story, the film at its heart did not convey the vision of community she wished to create. She said that she still went to the unnamed French provincial town, which inspired her novel and saw nuns riding their bicycles home from church with their fresh baguettes in the bicycle basket, an authentic world which she inferred was not captured in the Hollywood film of her novel.

A second concept of ‘voice’ is the idea of voice of cultural memory. At the 2012 CAPA conference, in the paper, “Asia Pacific Film.com marries Alexander Street Press” Vilsoni Hereniko discussed the challenge of distributing low budget and culturally significant films from the Asia Pacific — for him with the underlying intention of “Making silent voices heard”. Hereniko underlined particular challenges in marketing and distributing Pacific films: “Films that are culturally and historically important, but not necessarily of interest to commercial distributors. When they do reach a global audience, they promote better cultural understanding and a form of cultural diplomacy among all peoples in all countries all over the world”.

In addition, Hereniko discussed the importance of film as a medium for recording and sharing the “voice” of his people. He also discussed his own childhood and how the, “myths and stories of my own people transformed my own life and made me who I am today”. Hereniko suggested that it was imperative to know more about the wisdom, sensibilities, values and aesthetics that are embedded in original and oral stories of Oceania. He noted that this is a huge untapped resource, “an archive of knowledge and wisdom that would be worth exploring”, particularly in the context of the young who are generally only watching Hollywood movies.

We believe that any research regarding the future training of filmmakers from the Pacific must honour these concepts of ‘voice’. For us, it is essential that these filmmakers maintain their ‘voice’ and speak from the heart about and of their culture, and most importantly that they tell their stories themselves.

**Looking at National Cinemas through the Lens of Theory**

There is a long and deep tradition of research into the cinemas of the Nation States and Countries of the world. Consideration of what have been variously termed — National Cinemas, World Cinemas or Transnational Cinemas provides a rich and diverse body of academic research, viewed through the lens of theories including:

- The discourse of Orientalism that focuses on the study of the exotic “other”
- The critical/historical context of Post-Colonialism and the legacy of the colonization as it has impacted on the culture of the colonized and cultural diasporas
- The auteur model of Second Cinema
- The revolutionary voice and aesthetics of Third Cinema
- The emerging field of Trans-culturalism

Many of these models/methodologies, however have focused on National Cinemas in the context of a global market dominated by Hollywood, or indeed other National Cinemas that have established successful industries both at home and internationally. For example, on the one hand, well established European Cinemas such as France and Spain have been discussed via the auteur model of Second Cinema where the work of the great auteurs of the French New Wave or contemporary Spanish auteurs like Almodovar are conceptualised by their unique auteurist traits and concerns.
On the other hand, Latin American cinemas like Cuba and South America have been considered through the theoretic lens of Third Cinema. This posits cinema as a revolutionary tool — an art form based on a cultural rather than industrial model — the aesthetics of hunger or tears, revered by Third Cinema theorist and filmmaker, Glauba Rocha who turned the Jean Luc Godard attributed phrase “a camera in your hand and an idea in your head” into a revolutionary slogan 12.

But these paradigms are unfailingly steeped in a Western perspective, which has viewed Asia and Pacific cinema as a cultural object, to be discussed through a Western paradigm. “Asian cinematic forms are approached, in strikingly similar ways ... as specific negotiations between local/national/regional traditions and Western film conventions and aesthetics” 13.

While it is acknowledge that theoretical paradigms are in flux, scholarly writing regarding Asian and Pacific National Cinemas has generally approached this discussion in terms of concepts involving a critical mass on a particular national cinema, for example, China, Hong Kong, Japan and India; or genre as an example of a popular national and international National product, for example Hong Kong and martial arts films and India and Bollywood melodrama 14.

In order to move forward and in the light of the above discussion, this paper proposes three areas for study:

- Research focusing on the nature of Pacific Island Cinemas;
- Research regarding the study of these Cinemas in the context of Industrial, Cultural and Transnational Film Theories;
- Research regarding the capturing of Pacific Voices.

In particular, we propose that the gap in research into Asian Cinema identified by Ma Ning (Cinemaya) when suggesting that: “Questions such as how Asian filmmakers drew upon their traditional art forms in creating their national cinemas and whether there are any common patterns to be found in this process are yet to be answered” 15, is equally germane in a Pacific Island context.

**Three Models Trialed and Lessons Learned**

**Example 1. The Cultural Model - The Importance of Story - Myth and Community (A Case Study from Indonesia).**

At the CAPA 2012 Conference, Indonesian filmmaker and educator Riri Riza discussed the concept behind and experience of the Makassar SEAscreen Academy initiative, particularly in relation to the current growth and the associated challenges of and for Indonesian Cinema 16.

Among the key issues considered in the framing of the Academy is the fact that Indonesian Cinema is the voice of the politically and economically powerful in Java.

Of upmost pertinence to this paper is the fact that the Academy was also designed to inform a well-designed and sustainable plan for an actual nuts and bolts film school. The aims of the SEAscreen academy were to:

- i. Provide a well and sustainable platform of knowledge exchange among filmmakers who live in the East Indonesian region and;
- ii. Introduce a fresh approach in film productions, focusing on local initiatives by facilitating the emerging filmmakers to conceptualise their very own ideas whilst receiving professional assistance from established and prominent filmmakers in the region.

Fifty potential filmmakers aged 17-30 from all over Indonesia - Sulawesi, Lombok, Sumbawa and Papua applied for the 5-day SEAscreen Academy workshop and 20 were chosen to participate. Six experienced filmmakers from the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore...
and Indonesia mentored the students who attended seminars, watched films, went on field trips around Makassar to gather story ideas and worked with their teachers to produce a short film.

The selection committee chose participants based not only for their talent, but also their community involvement. These criteria may have been influential in the production of the final stories as what emerged were stories strongly grounded in community and local myths. Stories it would seem that reflect the “voice” and cultural memories of the peoples of Indonesia.

Example 2. An Industrial Model - A Proposal for Making It -The Digital Storytelling Model

In her paper, ‘Digital Storytelling for Pan Pacific Conversations’ (CAPA 2012 Conference) Associate Professor Shuchi Kothari proposed an initiative for the telling of Pan Pacific Stories using Berkley University’s Centre of Digital Storytelling, Digital Storytelling model. At Berkley the age-old concept of oral storytelling has been successfully transplanted into the digital domain to help over 10,000 people create and share their stories.

The model itself as proposed by Kothari is not complex and can be run over a three-day workshop. However like all good films, central to the success of the outcomes is the story itself - it has to be real and it has to have something compelling to say. But the story happens easily over a period of three days. In this model minimal technological infrastructure is required but the result is guaranteed - people become digital storytellers.

Example 3. The Challenge - What language do we use to speak?

It must be noted that the development of training scenarios for enabling filmmakers of the Pacific is not without its challenges. We have highlighted the fact that the region is rich with filmic stories waiting to be told and that digital technologies can provide cost effective and accessible models to tell these stories. However there are a number of issues that need to be addressed and researched in the creation of these filmmaking scenarios.

In ‘Asia Tell Us Your Stories. Rice: The ASEAN Story Lab’ Gabrielle Kelly highlights some of the very real issues that must be dealt with when developing films across cultures and therefore across languages. The ASEAN Lab was a one month long story telling lab initiative conducted by ASEAN and Republic of Korea to bring a writer, director and cinematographer together to tell ten minute films around the theme of “Rice” which resulted in the creation of a feature length Omnibus film from filmmakers across nine of the ASEAN countries involved in the lab.

Kelly notes in this paper a number of research areas which will need further investigation if we are to enable filmmaking in the Pacific. These include at script development stage: the problem of teaching and learning in a common language, the difficulty of accessing Final Draft Scriptwriting software in required languages and the availability of sample short film scripts from the region. Kelly also noted the need to develop a cinematic model that enabled or questioned the relevance to storytelling using the Western paradigms of film language and for example, the ideas of dramatic conflict, the paradigms of character in action and the unfolding of story via the conventions of shot composition and editing.

These problems were addressed in the Lab through an unfolding model (which warrants further research) by breaking down the barriers and developing an organic and communal approach to storytelling with the traditional key creatives - the writer, the director and the cinematographer having input to the story. The resultant stories were inspired by the model of an Icelandic film, The Last Farm (2010) which features little dialogue and features the landscape playing a key role in the final story.

Conclusion
The potential for post-graduate research that we are flagging presupposes that there is an
urge for the peoples of the Pacific to make and share their own films, and in addition, for
the world to want to, and be able to see these films. This challenge has been met to some
extent by asiapacificfilms.com <asiapacificfilms.com> a company set up to stream
independent films to libraries, colleges, universities and the general public in partnership
with Alexander Street Press, one of the largest distribution companies of digital education
materials in the US.

In discussing the creation of asiapacificfilms.com at the 2012 CAPA conference, Hereniko
observed “we could see that the potential for us to help the filmmakers of the Pacific to tell
their stories on film exists. We could see that there is an abundance of important stories
waiting to be told and that there are ways and means that we can use to help these
filmmakers make and distribute their stories” 20.

The evidence shows that Pacific Island peoples are beginning to tell their stories through
film and cinema. But what we don’t know is how best to go about supporting their efforts.
That is why we propose this research - so that “The future of the world can be influenced by
films that young people see and study”. 21

Nicholas Oughton and Margaret McVeigh
Griffith University
2013

Notes
   properties in the Pacific, Suva, Fiji, 15-18th July, 1997
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3. Asia Pacific Screen Academy at: <www.asiapacificscreenacademy.com/apsa-
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   Press, p261.
   September, 2012.
10. Harris, J. (2012) “Filming a Great Book” Brisbane Writers Festival, 8 September,
    2012.
    inaugural Conference Screen Education for the Asia-Pacific Century: New
    Partnerships & Future Directions, Griffith Film School, Brisbane, 22 November
    2012.
    Gibson, Pamela, World Cinema: Critical Approaches, Oxford: Oxford University
    Press, p203.
Appendix D

Summation *Burning Issues* Symposium

Below is a summary of the day’s agenda. Representatives were there from nine NSW University level courses from The University of New South Wales, The College of Fine Arts (which is within the University of NSW), The University of Newcastle, University of Technology, Sydney, University of Canberra, Macquarie University, Charles Sturt University, The Australian Film and Television School and University of Western Sydney. There were 15 attendees.

**AGENDA: BURNING ISSUES – UTS 19-6-13 – SPARC PROJECT**

10:00  Dean of FASS, Professor Mary Spongberg will give the welcome

10:15  Gillian Leahy and Susan Kerrigan (President of ASPERA) will give the opening address and plans for the day. Off the record/on the record discussed and resolved.

10:30  EVERYONE to talk for 5 minutes maximum on issues facing them re creative practice at their university/faculty/teaching area

12:15 PM  We use the preceding discussion to formulate topics for next session.

2:00  Topics (Whatever we work out but eg Workloads, What counts as Creative Outputs, ERA process, HERDC, Research Students, Student Scholarships.) Discuss each in terms and try to suggest actions.

3:15  Discuss Dr Josko Petkovic’s (Murdoch) proposal for a National Research Centre for screen based research. I will send this in a separate email.

4:00  Summing up. What motions or actions do we want to take forward? Who will take them? Where? What comment on Josko's MOU model we want to make? What would we like the SPARC reps to report back in Melbourne? What further research might flow from today?

5:00  Symposium ends.

**Summation of discussion and further action needed.**

- **Workload issues** –
  While some universities count major films as worth 5 research points using the ERA counting systems, other universities only allow the HERDC counting which sees a major film as equivalent to an article. The meeting believes this needs to be addressed.

**Actions:**

1. The Australian Screen Production and Education Research Association (ASPERA) write a statement about the lack of fit between ERA Outputs and HERDC outputs and circulate to relevant Deans re workload issues.

2. ASPERA undertake research on Creative Practice workload issues paying attention to institutions at university level where staff have little time allowed to undertake research.

There was discussion about another difficulty for staff undertaking screen based creative research. Staff who get funding from the government film funding
bodies cannot put the money through their universities. Because of that some universities do not count that income as research income for the particular staffer in the same way that ARC grants are counted. Nevertheless these are competitive peer decided grants. This is unfair to screen researchers who make films, videos and so forth.

**Action:** An ASPERA Motion should be moved and sent to the CEO of Screen Australia and to relevant Deputy Vice chancellors of research as follows: -

‘ASPERA wants Australian Universities to be able count government grants and other screen production research funding as if they were ARC grants for purposes of ‘research activity’ and workload.’

- **HERDC and ERA – what gets presented** –

Members at the meeting expressed that they felt unclear about what their universities had actually presented to ERA in the last round.

**Action:** We all try and get better info on what gets presented and why to the ERA collection.

- **Definitions of research** -

There was lengthy discussion of what did define creative screen research. Some took the view that video essays were appropriate forms. It was asked who decides what is creative research? Is any film research eg a TV commercial or an episode of Neighbours or does that have to be counted as professional work instead. The view was put forward that the ERA definition is useful as is the idea that the screen work has to be in some way a contribution to knowledge as a defining issue?

- **Creative Practice Research Students and Government Film Funding support.**

The issue that has been round for over 20 years now was discussed. Why is it that the National and State film funding bodies refuse to fund those ‘enrolled in a screen studies course’? This statement is ambiguous. It needs to be written for example in a way that guarantees that applicants are not ‘enrolled in an undergraduate screen production or studies course’. Currently research students feel that they cannot apply for screen Australia funding for PhD projects even where they are well established filmmakers. Such student are not ‘double-dipping’ and making it clear that they can apply would not bring an avalanche of applicants to the screen funding bodies. The policy is iniquitous.

**Action:** Deans in courses where creative practice screen research is undertaken should be urged to lobby Screen Australia to changes this policy.

- **Collaborations across our sector,** within school and faculty and upwards to international and national levels was discussed. AFTRS as was put forward as a possible industry partner, which has a number of ARC projects going ahead at present. Models were discussed which could allow connections between industry and research in universities.

- **Research Models and Creative Methodologies** -

There was discussion about how as supervisors we are sometimes at a loss how to advise our candidates on possible methodologies for their research in screen based creative production.

**Actions:**

Dr Cathie Payne and Dr Maree agreed to write a draft paper on types of models of creative screen research.

Gillian Leahy is to pay an RA from SPARC funds to get literature together for different models on creative/practice led research as annotated bibliography on Zotero. (Gillian Leahy has now employed an RA for this job).
• PhD/DCA Examiners and assessment for creative research theses -
There was general discussion. Gill mentioned her report in IM Journal which tries to demonstrate the similarity in assessment criteria for DCAs around the country and their similarity to the ERA definition of research.

**Actions:**
1. We should urge everyone to maintain ASPERA examiners list and for people to add themselves to it on the ASPERA website.
2. Gillian Leahy use SPARC funds to hire a research assistant if funds permit to collect the letters to examiners for DCAs from the 22 film schools involved in this research. (This has been done).

• The MOU Position Paper from Dr Josko Petkovic -
There was reading time for all to read this paper and proposed MOU for setting up a CRC. All thought there were useful arguments in the paper and that the proposal was well worth consideration.

Comments included :-
Are there things beyond what ASPERA can do that it will do?
Who would do it? What sort of people?
Aim is CRC or Centre of Excellence
What would it be? For exiting ones have broad ideas such as “wellbeing” or “cultural policy”. The idea needs to be broader to be a CRC.
If reworded to be an arm of ASPERA some would feel better about it - reads as a separate thing and doesn’t need to be.
Interesting idea
Maybe has legs and should begin.
If all had Deans had signed and agreed to a $2,000 or even $2,000 in kind as staff buyout for research that would give us a pot of money for research that we could advance as a group. A class buyout now costs about $8,000 if it is allowed at all.
Replacing ASPERA? Renaming ASPERA is it?
What would be the projects this would fund?
On balance strengthen some thought it would strengthen ASPERA.
It might unify small amounts of resources.
Collaboration only way for the sector to work even bodies like Screen Australia and the ARC disappear or have little funding to distribute for screen research.
Idea that people work across institutions is good— duplication is problem but collaboration is not.
ASPERA maybe needs to state collaboration aim and try to get up own research projects and own research arm.
Learned societies — maybe ASPERA should become a learned society — not give up on teaching as part of our interests.
DDCA? Are our Dean’s in it?.
Not need to be separate from ASPERA.
Could take over more of the research function of ASPERA which might be good thing.
Screen Studies and Screen Production separate – we should make more links with screen studies academics.

**Summation:** In general while the group could see some benefits in a CRC we felt it would be better at this stage to enhance ASPERA in this area maybe by setting up a separate arm of ASPERA to concentrate on encouraging research and dealing with some of the issues noted above.

**Reporting back to Melbourne SPARC Colloquium**
The group agreed that Gillian Leahy could report from NSW as noted above. A draft of the above was available for all to see projected in the room via data projector.
Appendix E

Victorian SPARC Project Report

Introduction

The Victorian SPARC project was designed to help the participating universities make an informed decision about developing a collaborative approach to screen production research.

This report captures the activities that were initiated by a meeting of the Victorian SPARC Representatives in October 2012 (See Appendix A). This includes a summary of the findings of the research conducted and a summary of the roundtable discussion that followed.

Summary of Research

The Victorian SPARC institutions were surveyed with regards to their screen production research and the areas of postgraduate study in which this is mostly conducted (See Appendix B).

At the time of the survey, across the four institutions, 180 students were studying for honours or postgraduate degrees in screen production. Chart 1 shows these people broken down by level of study and includes both coursework and research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chart 1: Level of Study</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Post-Doc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141 Masters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Honours &amp; Grad Dip</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 2 shows the same 180 students divided in a different way. The distinction is made between text-based and production-based study. The category text-based includes screen studies and screenwriting, while the category production-based includes all studies with a significant screen production component. These two categories are further divided into coursework and research.
While over half (102) of the students were producing screen works, a much smaller number (16) was producing screen works as a significant component of research-based activities.

Of these 16 people, 2 were studying for their Masters, 12 were PhD candidates and the remaining 2 were undertaking Post-Doctoral research.

There are 3 staff working at these institutions with higher degrees in production.

Generally, areas of research include:
- Film archives
- Scriptwriting for feature films & TV series
- Traditional forms of documentary
- Online interactive documentary
- Methods of animation production
- Shock in Underground Cinema
- Australian Social Realism and the Feminine
- Experimental Film
- The essay film
- Machinima
- Animation

Coursework production includes animation, documentary, music video and web series, but is typically 5 to 15 minutes of drama designed for festivals or online delivery.

All institutions are considering the possibilities that ERA may provide for screen production research and are taking steps towards increasing their production research. One institution reported that a consequent increase in applications for PhD study has led to a corresponding increase in rejections because applicants were under-qualified in research.

Time and money are the two main obstacles to increased research in screen production. Teaching commitments allow little time for research and the funding needed to free up
those hours has not come from inside or outside the university. This is exacerbated by industry not going to universities for their research solutions and by the high cost of film production.

Apart from some commitment to continuing in their current areas of specialization, no institution has identified a particular research area they would prefer to explore. It is presumed, also, that personal practice and personal interests would be a factor.

However, it was suggested that research might explore:

- The prototyping of innovative forms of production (in relation to technologies, narratives, formal & stylistic approaches and production processes & workflows)
- New forms of collaboration
- Micro-budget features
- Alternative script development methods
- New methods of working with actors
- Experimental film methodologies
- Ethnographical documentary
- Fictocriticism
- Storytelling methodologies
- The effect the Australian film production model has on the creation of meaning
- Case studies in professional practice

**Summary of Discussion: Roundtable of the Victorian SPARC Representatives**

**17 June 2013**

**Present:**
Leo Berkeley, Rachel Wilson & Nick Moore (researcher), RMIT University
John Cumming, Deakin University
Nicolette Freeman & Annabelle Murphy, VCA
Jock Given, Swinburne University of Technology
John Hughes, Independent Filmmaker
Sue Maslin, Filmart Media
David Rapsey, Independent Writer and Producer
Ros Walker, Walker Films

**Absent:**
Jill Holt & Vincent Giarrusso, Swinburne University of Technology
Leon Marvell, Deakin University

**Brief Summary of Discussion**
1. Screen production needs to better establish its place in the academy.
2. Governments are reluctant to fund university-based screen production.
3. The remit of Screen Australia’s Research and Strategy division leaves much territory under-researched.
4. Funding bodies have a negligible relationship with graduates.
5. University funding structures favour teaching over research.
6. Academic research culture is changing.
8. Research methodologies are expanding beyond reflective practice.
9. Potential areas of production research have been identified, including a discussion of industry’s needs.
10. The implementation of new technologies was identified as an area to avoid.
11. The contra deal is a working model for Industry/Academy partnerships.
12. Barriers to Industry/Academy partnerships include resource priorities, insurance and research quanta requirements.
13. Other partnerships centered on embedding industry personnel into the academy.
14. Generational change is bringing the academy into the industry.
15. An Industry/Academy Centre should be, amongst many things, a centre for innovative practice, policy and research and it should also represent the combined interests of the Screen Industry and Screen Academy to Government.
16. All parties were keen to meet and pursue these ideas into the future.

Detailed Summary of Discussion

1. Establishing a place for Screen in the University
   • Screen production has a very small research profile in the academy.
   • Screen production departments have very few professors and little clout within the academic establishment or at government level in relation to research.
   • The lack of screen production professors is due to a lack of evidence of a substantial research career, the lack of an international academic profile and the fact that academics need to attract research funding into the university.

2. Government Funding of University Production
   • Government agencies (such as Film Victoria) have a deliberate policy of not funding films through tertiary institutions in order to avoid government “cross-subsidization”.
   • A co-production model could overcome this.
   • Open Channel and the Melbourne International Film Festival have found ways to receive production funding from the Victorian government for quasi-educational programs.

3. The Role of Screen Australia’s Research and Strategy division
   • Screen Australia’s research is focused on industry statistics and audience figures.
   • A key difficulty Screen Australia has is that it is tasked with researching its own performance.
   • Whatever policy research and advocacy Screen Australia performs, it is not visible enough.
   • Ruth Harley (CEO 2008-2013) was quoted as having stated that policy is not Screen Australia’s role.
   • Policy is enacted that has no apparent basis in research.
   • A policy research ‘gap in the market’ was identified.

4. The relationship between graduates and the funding bodies
   • No shorts production programs (aside from Open Channel’s micro-fund “Raw Nerve”) are available.
   • Other production funding is unattainable for emerging practitioners.
   • Unless their student work is screening at one of a handful of travel grant festivals, students currently have no connection to the government screen authorities and no point at which they can enter a relationship with them.

5. The conflict between research and course delivery
   • A time-intensive teaching approach for screen production is important.
   • This creates a problematic workload model when you balance this with research.
6. Academic Research Culture
- Universities are under pressure to expand their research and to strengthen the relationship between academy and industry.
- To this end, a new agenda built around production research is desirable.
- Universities have research offices that manage research funding.
- Some universities are developing research clusters to concentrate resources and provide focus.
- At Deakin, there has been an attempt to separate research and teaching activities by distinguishing research and teaching personnel/hours.

7. The Problem of “Publishing” a Film
- Publishing articles in certain journals triggers money from the federal government, but exhibiting films does not.
- Not all films should be considered research.
- Some production research need not result in the creation of a whole film.
- Also, in the scientific model, ‘failure’ is a viable outcome and can lead to the publication of research. But if there is no film, what is to be published?

8. Reflective Practice and Research Methodologies
- Many graduates have gained expertise at reflective practice.
- Reflective practice is not necessarily well regarded by the ARC.
- The strategy of an individual academic making his or her own individual film need not be the only viable approach and may not be the most useful to research culture.
- There are opportunities here for real innovation and for a more demanding approach to be made to research and reflective practice.
- Most visual artists must reference art history, but this is not applied to filmmaking practice.
- Ethnographic research was suggested as a methodology. Close observation of the lighting department might lead to the development of an hypothesis that could be tested through production research.

9a. Potential Areas of Production Research
- The prototyping of new methodologies.
For more details of these, see the Results of the SPARC Survey and Leo Berkeley’s appended Roundtable Discussion Paper.

9b. Why Industry Needs Research
- Industry research is only being done when it is commercially viable to do so.
- Industry is risk averse and people working in a university context should be able to take research risks.
- To know why and how it’s doing what it’s doing.
- To answer the question, “Is this the best way to do it?”
- The decline of single documentaries
- The effect of the broadening of distribution opportunities
- The effect of convergence on production methodologies
- The market failing to answer these questions defines the space in which academic research can be conducted.

10. Why the Academy should avoid researching new technologies
- Profitability provides a strong impetus to industry.
• Fast turnaround doesn’t suit collaboration with academia.
• Access to the latest technology can often be problematic for academic researchers.
• Technology companies allow their consumers to research and problem-solve new products for them.
• Professionals don’t have time to share new knowledge and techniques with researchers.
• Experiments in alternative cinema content are opportunistic. Distributors use audience attendance as research.
• Tech companies might be able to do research through coursework students.

11. Industry/Academy Partnerships - Contra
• A degree of industry engagement happens through guest lecturing.
• The production collaboration model is vexed because external productions lose 15% when funds enter universities via Centres of Business Affairs.
• A number of universities allow this to be circumvented through a contra model.
• Three instances of transmedia projects developed with universities using this system were identified.
• University assets include equipment, studios, IT servers and the labour of students.

12. Barriers to Industry/Academy Partnerships
• Equipment in insured for students performing curricular activities; this excludes research.
• Teaching gets the higher priority for resources because teaching income is more obvious.
• The contra approach may also be out of step with university requirements for research quanta.

13. Other models of Industry/Academy Partnerships
• RMIT Architecture School directly develops relationships with innovative practitioners, rather than seeking to engage the industry as a whole.
• Places for the industry in academia could be created through fellowships, short academic research projects and similar devices.
• The professors of the film industry are such people as Peter Weir, Nadia Tass, John Hughes, etc. It was firmly started these are the people who rightfully belong as Fellows and Adjunct Professors.

14. The context of Industry/Academy Separation
• The product of the generation whose education in screen production was based on an apprenticeship model.
• The new generation of university educated film professionals brings the academy into the industry.

Both industry and academy representatives indicated their willingness to participate in further industry/academy meetings. This led to speculation about an Industry/Academy

15. Characteristics of an Industry/Academy Centre
• A centre for innovative practice.
• A systematic or organized way for industry and academia to come together.
• A central body to go to for research, publications and policy development.
• A state/national space where the academy could come together, recognizing the specializations of individual institutions.
• Responsible for an expert/professorial field/lobby that speaks to government or industry or academy about policy and culture around innovation.
• A centre for policy, planning and research.
• Much communication and facilitation are needed to turn this into action, especially explaining it to industry.

16. The Future
• All at the meeting wanted to take these ideas further.
• The meeting was declared useful for equipping academics with details of other successes at other Universities. This is useful for internal conversations.

Conclusion
Both academy and industry representatives found meeting to discuss research a useful activity. Regular and formal meetings were viewed favorably.

Academic representatives looked eagerly forward to the SPARC Colloquium and the later meeting of ASPERA.
Appendix F

2001 – 2012 Discovery Grants FOR FoR 1902 Film, Television and Digital Media and 4103 Cinema, Electronic Arts and Multimedia

Source ARC website: <www.arc.gov.au/ncgp/dp/dp_outcomes.htm>

2012 (1 grant)

1902 FILM, TELEVISION AND DIGITAL MEDIA
Macquarie University
DP130101108 Millard, Prof Kathryn H; Reicher, Prof Stephen D
Approved

Project Title  Reinterpreting Milgram's obedience studies via documentary film
2013  $85,000.00
2014  $70,000.00
Total  $155,000.00
Primary FoR 1902 FILM, TELEVISION AND DIGITAL MEDIA

Administering Organisation  Macquarie University

Project Summary
One of the hardest dilemmas we can face is responding to directions which go against our conscience. Stanley Milgram’s ‘obedience to authority’ paradigm appears to show that most of us will comply. Fifty years after his landmark film ‘Obedience’, this multidisciplinary project will re-examine his hugely influential but often misunderstood work.

2011 (2 grants)

Deakin University
DP120101940 Verhoeven, Prof Deb; Maltby, Prof Richard; Arrowsmith, A/Prof Colin A; Bowles, Dr Kate; Coate, Dr Bronwyn S
Approved

Project Title  Only at the movies: mapping the contemporary Australian cinema market
2012  $83,000.00
2013  $123,000.00
2014  $83,000.00
Total  $289,000.00
Primary FoR 1902 FILM, TELEVISION AND DIGITAL MEDIA

Administering Organisation  Deakin University

Project Summary
Only at the movies? is a three-year project that asks: What is the enduring appeal of cinemagoing and how is it changing? It will provide detailed analyses of formal film exhibition and distribution in Australia by combining economic, cultural and geospatial research with industry expertise.

The University of New South Wales
DP120102243 Del Favero, Prof Dennis G; Bennett, Prof Jill; Brown, Em/Prof Neil C; Shaw, Prof Jeffrey; Weibel, Prof Peter; Frohne, Prof Ursula A; Chan, Prof Johnny C
Approved
Project Title
Atmoscape: the aesthetic reformulation of the atmosphere using intelligent imaging systems
2012 $125,000.00
2013 $125,000.00
2014 $118,000.00
Total $368,000.00
Primary FoR 1902 FILM, TELEVISION AND DIGITAL MEDIA

Administering Organisation The University of New South Wales

Project Summary
The proposed research provides Australia with an opportunity to advance its understanding of atmosphere and climate by building the world's first remote sensing visualisation system networked across three continents.

2010 (1 grant)

1902 FILM, TELEVISION AND DIGITAL MEDIA
The University of New South Wales
DP110101146 A/Prof Dennis G Del Favero, Prof Jeffrey Shaw, Prof Johnny C Chan, Prof Terence E Smith
Approved

Project Title The reformulation of landscape as a user-generated interactive aesthetic
2011 $115,000.00
2012 $112,000.00
2013 $107,000.00
2014 $70,748.00
2015 $70,748.00
APF A/Prof Dennis G Del Favero

Administering Organisation The University of New South Wales

Project Summary
This project seeks to provide Australia with an opportunity to advance its understanding of landscape and climate change by building the world's first networked landscape visualisation system.

2009 (5 grants)

4103 CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA
Monash University
DP1093920 Dr A Martin; Prof ME Morris; Miss NS Brenez
Approved

Project Title Between Film and Art: An International Study of Intermedial Cinema
2010: $ 77,000
2011: $ 75,000
2012: $ 88,000

Administering Organisation Monash University

Project Summary
This study of new forms of digital, intermedial art will lead to a greater understanding of the position of film in the 21st Century. It will make a major contribution to the history of aesthetics and our understanding of the role of art in contemporary societies. It will raise the international profile of Australia’s contribution to theory, criticism and creative practice in the fields of cinema and art, with its investigative team bringing inputs from Australia,
 Developing a collaborative national postgraduate research program for 22 Australian film schools

Hong Kong and France. Within Australia, it will nurture an interdisciplinary, collaborative approach to understanding, making and exhibiting the newest audiovisual art forms.

DP1094064 A/Prof JP McCormack; Dr A Dorin; Dr M Whitelaw; Prof W Latham
Approved

Project Title A Process-Based Approach to Generative Form Synthesis
2010 : $  90,000
2011 : $  80,000
2012 : $  80,000
2013 : $  60,000
2014 : $  51,000
ARF A/Prof JP McCormack

Administering Organisation Monash University
Project Summary
This project addresses open problems in digital media art, introducing innovative methods for professional practitioners. Through close collaboration with a highly successful UK pioneer and his team, this research nurtures Australian expertise and scholarship. Creative industries are making an increasingly important global economic contribution. Related projects overseas demonstrate the potential for tangible commercial benefits as a direct result of research investment in this domain. The practical outcomes of this research find application in architecture, computer games, digital animation and new media art. This inter-disciplinary project enhances collaborative links between the research communities of Computer Science and Media Arts.

The University of New South Wales
DP1094613 A/Prof PH Dawson; A/Prof M Takatsuka; Dr H Yoshikawa; Prof RL Gregory
Approved

Project Title Holoshop: The design, implementation and evaluation of rapid 3D drawing technology for content creation in holograms and other three-dimensional displays
2010 : $  73,000
2011 : $  86,000
2012 : $  79,000
2013 : $118,000
2014 : $  47,000

Administering Organisation The University of New South Wales
Project Summary
This project, in developing tools and technologies to enable rapid, free-hand, three-dimensional electronic drawing will give a particular visual impetus to the development of display systems technology. It further strengthens Australia's already strong record of applying aesthetic criteria to technological questions and contributing to the international development of virtual media. The resulting intellectual exchanges will raise consciousness of the crucial nature of representation in spatial imaging display. Collaborating with the world class Media Lab (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) as they invent holographic television for the consumer market will give Australia a key role in the experimental design of 3D content creation.

DP1095077 A/Prof G Kouvaros
Approved

Project Title Robert Frank: Experimentation Across Film and Photography in Post-War America
2010 : $  72,000

Developing a collaborative national postgraduate research program for 22 Australian film schools

201
Developing a collaborative national postgraduate research program for 22 Australian film schools

2011: $ 64,000
2012: $ 28,000

Administrating Organisation The University of New South Wales
Project Summary
A study of Frank's career will establish critical models that can be applied to the work of Australian artists and filmmakers – especially those whose personal histories are linked to the waves of immigration that occurred during the '50s and '60s. The publication of a monograph, journal articles, interviews, a DVD and the staging of a retrospective will increase public awareness not only of Frank's work but also the work of those he has influenced. By including an overseas classroom element, this project also provides the opportunity to showcase the quality of Australian film research to high-calibre US students. This is vital to maintaining Australia's international reputation as a provider of film and media research.

University of Technology, Sydney
DP1092956 Dr T Forrest
Approved

Project Title Alternative Public Spheres: Alexander Kluge's Film and Television Experiments
2010: $ 49,036
2011: $ 61,880
2012: $ 34,972

Administrating Organisation University of Technology, Sydney
Project Summary
This project will make a significant contribution to the emphasis on 'Promoting an Innovation Culture and Economy' outlined in Research Priority 3 through its analysis of the important role film and television producers can play in the establishment of alternative public spheres. Taking Alexander Kluge's groundbreaking work as a case study, it will highlight the integral relationship between an active public sphere and the sustenance of an innovative and democratic culture in which the capacity to think 'outside the square' is fostered, supported, and appreciated. In doing so, it will internationalise Australia's knowledge base in the field, and place Australia at the forefront of international debates in Screen Studies.

2008 (3 grants)

4103 CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA
The University of Melbourne
DP0987349 Dr Al Yue; Dr OS Khoo; Dr BM Smaill
Approved

Project Title The History of Asian Australian Cinema: Diaspora, Policy and Ethics
2009: $ 95,000
2010: $ 50,000
2011: $ 33,000

Administrating Organisation The University of Melbourne
Project Summary
This interdisciplinary project will develop a history of the representation of Asians in Australian cinema. Understanding this history promotes an engaged citizenry, facilitates intercultural communication and strengthens Australia's social fabric. It will enhance Australia's capacity to engage in the Asian region. Examining the creative film developments of Asian Australian filmmakers will promote an innovative cultural economy. The study on how film agencies and archives have managed Asian Australian cinema is a resource for
policy and film makers in the industry. The new diasporic cinema studies framework developed will consolidate Australia's established reputation in cinema studies and advance international film scholarship.

The University of Sydney
DP0988336 Dr M Velonaki
Approved

**Project Title** Physicality, tactility, intimacy: interaction between humans and robots
2009 : $ 203,679
2010 : $ 198,619
2011 : $ 154,319
2012 : $ 98,570
2013 : $ 98,570
ARF Dr M Velonaki

**Administering Organisation** The University of Sydney

**Project Summary**
Until recently robotics has been regarded as a strictly technological discipline. This research brings a fresh perspective to interactive robotics by investigating new ways that humans and robots can interact physically in socially empowered environments. The knowledge created in the project will advance both interactive media arts and robotics science. The theoretical outcomes of this research will open up an entirely new cross-disciplinary approach to engagement between humans and machines, promoting Australia's growing reputation for innovation and creativity. The practical demonstration of this approach will lead to a new level of advanced robotics capability in applications such as health- and aged-care.

University of Technology, Sydney
DP0988939 Prof TJ Van Leeuwen; Dr EN Djonov; A/Prof KL O'Halloran
Approved

**Project Title** Towards a social theory of semiotic technology: Exploring PowerPoint's design and its use in higher education and corporate settings
2009 : $ 120,000
2010 : $ 110,000
2011 : $ 110,000
APD Dr EN Djonov

**Administering Organisation** University of Technology, Sydney

**Project Summary**
PowerPoint has become the dominant technology for designing and delivering presentations in many important settings and skills in the use of PowerPoint have become essential for professional and academic success. This study will investigate the use of PowerPoint in higher education and corporate settings in order to discover what these skills are and how the design of PowerPoint supports or hinders the achievement of a range of communicative purposes. The study will provide guidelines for evaluating and improving the design and use of PowerPoint and other, similar presentation software.

2007 (3 grants)

4103 CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA
Monash University
DP0877320 Dr JP McCormack
Approved

**Project Title** Computational Creativity: an evolutionary ecosystem approach
2008 : $ 70,000
Developing a collaborative national postgraduate research program for 22 Australian film schools

2009 : $ 60,000
2010 : $ 65,000

**Administering Organisation**  Monash University
**Project Summary**
The creative industries are at the forefront of a 21st century economy. For Australia to play a leading role, artists and designers require innovative software systems that support original creative practice. Creativity is a highly sought-after yet little understood phenomena. This research will advance our understanding of creativity, developing imaginative new ways of working with technology: enabling creative outcomes that are difficult or impossible to achieve with existing software tools. In a global and rapidly changing industry, this project will give Australian creative practitioners and software developers a competitive edge, enhancing our international reputation as a leader in this area.

The Flinders University of South Australia
DP0879695 Prof R Maltby; Dr M Walsh; Dr K Bowles; A/Prof D Verhoeven; Prof JJ Matthews; A/Prof CA Arrowsmith
Audiences 1956-1984
Approved

**Project Title**  Mapping the movies: the changing nature of Australia's cinema circuits and their audiences 1956-1984
2008 : $ 157,944
2009 : $ 101,486
2010 : $ 76,486
2011 : $ 52,972

**Administering Organisation**  The Flinders University of South Australia
**Project Summary**
Support for film production is a high profile component in Australian cultural policy, but the cultural and commercial opportunity represented by cinema exhibition and attendance is less well understood. Focusing on the three decades after the introduction of television in 1956, this project is the first of its kind to use geospatial visualisation to map the social and economic circuits of cinema-going, and to identify the variables that explain cinema diversification, survival or closure. It will contribute to policy analysis in terms of local media access modelling, and will consolidate this team's international reputation for innovative Australian research in the representation of historical data.

University of Tasmania
DP0880589 Mr GP Chapman
Approved

**Project Title**  The Researching Editing and Publication of Historical Records of Australia
2008 : $ 80,580
2009 : $ 70,580
2010 : $ 70,580

**Administering Organisation**  University of Tasmania
**Project Summary**
These will be two fold: first in continuing and completing the original Historical Records of Australia Series originally supported and promoted by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library, shortly after Federation, thus using a Federation Fellowship to complete a great original Federation project; second by providing in edited research form as described above, the vital historical documentation of historical processes continuing in this country, especially in relation to the indigenous peoples of Australia, the governance of the states,
and matters of crime, punishment and emigration which were at the heart of the political
debates and developing policies of the era and which are matters of significance in present
Australia.

2006     (3 grants)

4103 CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA
Griffith University
DP0773059 Prof MA Farquhar
Approved

**Project Title**: The global impact of Chinese martial arts films and their potential to use
Australian technology
2007 : $ 44,782
2008 : $ 41,150
2009 : $ 40,957

**Administering Organisation**: Griffith University

**Project Summary**
A study of martial arts film is of national benefit in several ways. First, it makes a scholarly
contribution to film studies in our Asia Pacific region. Second, it enhances our understanding
of issues arising from Chinese popular culture, such as soft power, cultural nationalism,
regional rivalries, combat, and justice. Finally, Australian companies have been involved in
the high-technology end of landmark Chinese martial arts films, which provides Australians
with opportunities for developing business relationships, producing new creative content,
and expanding innovative technologies with an important market in the global environment.

Monash University
DP0772667 Dr JP McCormack; Dr A Dorin; Mr TC Innocent

**Project Title**: Approved Design after Nature: Generative Models for Digital Media
2007 : $ 93,000
2008 : $ 72,000
2009 : $ 84,000

**Administering Organisation**: Monash University

**Project Summary**
The outcomes of this project address current problems in digital media design. This research
will nurture emerging Australian expertise and scholarship in computational creativity.
Creative industries are making an increasingly important contribution to the global
economy. Related projects overseas demonstrate the potential for tangible commercial
benefits as a direct result of research investment in this field. The practical outcomes of this
research find application in fields such as computer games, digital animation effects and
new media arts. This inter-disciplinary project will enhance collaborative links between the
research communities of Computer Science, Art and Design.

The University of Melbourne
DP0773501 A/Prof BA Creed; A/Prof JJ Hoorn
Approved

**Project Title**: Cinema and Civilisation: Science, Progress and Empire in Early Film
2007 : $ 129,000
2008 : $ 86,000
2009 : $ 83,000

**Administering Organisation**: The University of Melbourne

**Project Summary**
This study will explore the role of early film in disseminating the Western ideals of progress, science and technology in the colonial nations of Australia’s region. Early films made about Indonesia, Indochina, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia and Singapore as well as India and North Africa will be studied. The study will reveal Australia’s dual roles as a recipient of the civilising mission and later as a propagator of this knowledge in its own sphere of influence. Such an understanding will lead to a fuller comprehension of the relative meaning of terms such as progress', 'science' and 'civilisation' in Australia and its region.

2005 (1 grant)

4103 CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA
The University of New South Wales
DP0667261 Dr EA Scheer
Approved

Project Title Nineteenth Century Precursors Of New Media Art. On Time and Performance in Early Experiments in Art and Science.
2006 : $35,000
2007 : $20,000
2008 : $20,000

Administering Institution The University of New South Wales

Project Summary
The research outcomes will enhance the profile of new media arts and performance studies in Australia by providing a model for other research in emergent and cross-disciplinary artforms. This project addresses the relative absence of scholarship on the meaning and significance of time and performance in the history of media art. It will attempt to clarify and provide a model of analysis for debates surrounding the nature of time based art. It will provide a basis for understanding both the temporal and performative nature of new media art and the place of media in live performance.

2004 (5 grants)

4103 : CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA
Murdoch University
DP0559206 Dr Y Chu

Project Title: The Democractisation of Documentary Cinema in China
2005 : $40,044
2006 : $35,044
Category: 4103 - CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA

Administering Institution: Murdoch University

Project Summary:
The Democratisation of Documentary Cinema in China has cultural, political, economic, and research benefits for Australia. Culturally, the Project provides an analysis of the ways China views itself and the world. Politically, the Project enriches Australia’s understanding of how media control in China has been transformed from 1949 to the age of globalisation. Economically, the Project enhances Australia’s chances of finding a niche in the world’s largest documentary film market. As a contribution to research, the Project will produce the first in-depth study of Chinese documentary film, its industry and politics and so offers Australia a new perspective on how political change is reflected in one of China’s leading media productions.

The Flinders University of South Australia
DP0560144 Prof R Maltby; Dr M Walsh; Dr K Bowles; Ms DK Verhoeven

Project Title Regional Markets and Local Audiences: Case Studies in Australian Cinema
Consumption, 1928-1980
2005 : $189,271
2006 : $128,427
2007 : $115,839
Category: 4103 - CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA

Administering Institution: The Flinders University of South Australia

Project Summary:
The argument that Australian cinema maintains Australian identity is mirrored by the perception that imported cinema threatens national cultural integrity. We examine the historical basis for this discourse in order to propose alternative conceptual frameworks which view cultural exchange in less alarmist terms. In analysing the role of cinema in the creation of community identity, our research positions the social experience of Australian cinema-going as central to emerging international research, and provides a basis from which policy researchers can sustain a more complex account of national cultural maintenance, given the demographic circumstances which unavoidably position Australia as a net importer of cinema product.

The University of New South Wales
DP0556659 Dr D Del Favero; Prof J Shaw; Prof S Benford; Prof J Goebel

Project Title: Co-evolutionary narrative as machine autonomy in the relationship between artificial agents and human participants in interactive cinema
2005 : $167,874
2006 : $152,874
2007 : $162,874
2008 : $135,874
2009 : $100,126
Category: 4103 - CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA
QEII Dr D Del Favero

Administering Institution: The University of New South Wales

Project Summary:
The research has pioneering cultural and economic benefits for Australia and is focused on integrating machine and human intelligence within interactive cinema with potential application across a range of new media art forms, location based entertainment, home theatre and on-line education. This study anticipates autonomous machine agent and human convergences, where there is high demand for narrative enrichment as a way of satisfying a voracious demand for content and experiential permutations. The capacity for investing autonomous machine agent and human interactions with aesthetic potential represents a significant cultural aggregation for an expanded cinema, entertainment and educational industry.

DP0558729 Dr G Kouvaros

Project Title: The Misfits and the iconography of post-war American acting
2005 : $30,000
2006 : $58,000
2007 : $30,000
Category: 4103 - CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA

Administering Institution: The University of New South Wales

Project Summary:
The project will address a shortage of scholarly writing on transformations in the iconography of post-war American acting. It will develop a model of analysis in which the study of social and institutional forces surrounding the development of performance styles works in tandem with a reading of iconic images. The project outcomes will enhance the
Developing a collaborative national postgraduate research program for 22 Australian film schools

The University of Sydney
DP0557953 Dr Jayamanne

**Project Title:** Cinema and the Senses: Temporality of the films of Stanley Kubrick, Terrence Malick and Kumar
2005 : $30,000  
2006 : $41,000  
2007 : $32,000
Category: 4103 - CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA

**Administering Institution:** The University of Sydney

**Project Summary:**
The resulting monograph, articles and seminars will provide new methodologies for Australian cinema studies which has tended to depend on Euro-American models. The project offers three distinct ways of thinking about an ecology of the human senses in and through cinema. The ideas on cine-synaesthesia would link up with current research on this topic in other disciplines such as neurophysiology, painting and music. The interdisciplinarity of the project offers, to the public sphere of Australian cinema, cross-cultural and cross-media perspectives on film aesthetics.

2003 (6 grants)

4103 : CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA
The Australian National University
DP0451157 Prof K Louie

**Project Title:** Globalising Masculine Ideals: Chinese Men in Australia since 1980
2004 : $31,815  
2005 : $31,746  
2006 : $29,666
Category: 4103 - CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA

**Administering Institution:** The Australian National University

**Project Summary:**
This project explores how masculinity is constructed in present-day Australia amongst the Chinese diaspora and how these constructions have been and are being transformed. It follows from my recent research on the wen-wu (cultural attainment; martial valour) dyad as a Chinese masculinity ideal. My hypothesis in this project is that the traditional stereotypes continue their influence among the Chinese diaspora, but with salient modifications. The traditional primacy of wen is being contested when wen-wu is transplanted onto the Australian context. The findings, to be published as a book and articles, will shed new light on the evolving Chinese masculine identity.

The University of Melbourne
DP0451331 A/Prof B Creed Dr J Hoorn

**Project Title:** The Darwinian Screen: Race in Pacific and Australian Film 1900-1970
2004 : $66,700  
2005 : $72,400  
2006 : $59,332
Category: 4103 - CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA

**Administering Institution:** The University of Melbourne

**Project Summary:**
This project examines the influence of Darwinism in filmic narratives which deal with race
that are set in Australia and the Pacific from 1900-1970. Science Fiction, Travel, South Seas Island Romance, Colonial Adventure and Jungle films made in Australia, New Zealand, America, the UK and France will be considered in order to determine the design and construction of race. The search for primitive man, the construction of 'types', the creation of utopian spaces for white subjects, the representation of evolution and devolution, the making of the Pacific as site for scientific endeavour and the production of narratives of survival are among the areas to be considered.

The University of New South Wales
DP0450596 A/Prof JT Davis Dr L Trahair

**Project Title**: The Staging and Framing of Comic Performance in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

**2004**: $20,000  
**2005**: $40,000  
**2006**: $20,000  
**Category**: 4103 - CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA

**Administering Institution**: The University of New South Wales

**Project Summary**: The aim of this project is to investigate the aesthetics of comic performance through an examination of low comic performance in nineteenth century American and English popular theatre and in the slapstick films of the early twentieth century. Uniquely combining the complementary specialisms in theatre and film this study will pioneer a highly original approach to achieve new ways of considering theatrical and cinematic comedy both historically and theoretically.

DP0452144 Ms PH Dawson

**Project Title**: Luminous presence: Using early mosaics and gilded aureoles to augment the interface between holographic images and the beholder

**2004**: $37,000  
**2005**: $52,000  
**2006**: $47,000  
**Category**: 4103 - CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA

**Administering Institution**: The University of New South Wales

**Project Summary**: This project seeks to develop a new style of representation for holographic subjects through the modulation effects of "scintillating" backgrounds. As the purpose of holographic displays moves away from the replication of extant objects towards the artistic generation of synthetic/creative content, holographic images call increasingly upon conventions of pictorial style as well as the tacit perceptions of beholders for their successful interpretation. In this study the reflected light of traditional mosaics is used to modulate projected light articulating the holographic subject. The augmented image activates cues such as occlusion and retinal disparity employed by beholders in the perception of holograms.

The University of Queensland
DP0452396 Dr MR Pierson

**Project Title**: Experimental Cinemas and their Publics

**2004**: $28,800  
**2005**: $20,000  
**2006**: $32,800  
**Category**: 4103 - CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA

**Administering Institution**: The University of Queensland
**Project Summary:**
The aim of this project is to undertake a major study of the cultural organisations and institutions that have shaped different types of cinematic experiment and their publics in Australia, Britain, and the United States since the mid-1940s. This study's assertion that all experiment in the cinema has been undertaken in an environment of culturally and institutionally controlled risk, has been designed both to contribute to an important revision of the way experimental cinema is thought about and taught, and to engage film and new media producers themselves in critical discussion about the roles of institutions in experimental media cultures.

The University of Sydney
DP0452307 Ms JH Starrs

**Project Title:** Investigation into digital games and Australian female digital game culture.
2004 : $28,000
Category: 4103 - CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA

**Administering Institution:** The University of Sydney

**Project Summary:**
The project investigates new paradigms for digital games specifically oriented to young female users, aged from 16 to 25 years. This study explores female digital game culture, particularly in Australia, to create solutions that support gender equity, and will involve research into innovative design of multi-user online games. It aims to produce, test and refine online prototypes involving different gameplay scenarios, as well as produce theoretical reports to be published in journals, mailing lists and conference proceedings.

2002 (4 grants)

4103 : CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA
DP0346691  Prof MC Burry Prof L Padgham

**Project Title:** Sharing Complex Systems information by challenging the orthodoxies of linear presentation.
2003 : $53,000
2004 : $63,000
2005 : $48,000
Category: 4103 - CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA

**Administering Institution:** RMIT University

**Project Summary:**
Information Technology has contributed more to working with complex systems than to communicating them. Presentation software styled on the power of the point hardly addresses the restrictions of traditional media: sequential visual information display with little possibility for the cross-reference needed to communicate a complex situation. This research will test the effectiveness of our multidimensional presentation software prototype in a range of complex system situations in order to improve the opportunities for interactive spatial media in today's work and learning environments.

DP0345547  Dr D Del Favero A/Prof NC Brown Prof J Shaw Prof P Weibel

**Project Title:** Interactive Narrative as a Form of Recombinatory Search in the Cinematic Transcription of Televisual Information
2003 : $97,542
2004 : $119,412
2005 : $25,000
Category: 4103 - CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA

**Administering Institution:** The University of New South Wales
**Project Summary:**
This study investigates the role of interactive narrative in the cinematic reconstruction of televisual information. Through the design of software enabling the recombinatory search of televisual data within virtual environments, it tests the conduct of narrative transcription as a model for interactive cinematic production. The value of the study is set against the fact that while narrative is central to conventional cinema emphasis upon simulation has caused the narrative potential of digital media to be overlooked. Advancing the world’s first cinematic concept of transcriptive narrative it seeks evidence of the multi-temporal agency of interactivity as expanded within revisionist cinematic theory.

DP0345600 Dr A Munster

**Project Title:** The body-computer interface in new media art from 1984 to the present
2003 : $37,193
2004 : $29,000
2005 : $20,144
Category: 4103 - CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA

**Administrating Institution:** The University of New South Wales

**Project Summary:**
Our understanding of computers is restricted by dominant cognitive models of the interface. This study produces an aesthetic framework for analysing new media art as a genre and traces its development through changes in the interface from the restricted keyboard/screen assemblage through multiple sensory interfaces to the emerging trend of producing the interface as dynamic relation between biology and code. It examines the development of interfaces between the body and computers in new media art work, establishing that new media artists, from 1984 onwards, have focussed upon the sensate body as site for interfacing with, and interpenetrating, virtual media.

DP0346291 Dr GM Schiemer

**Project Title:** Pocket Gamelan: Tuning Musical Applications for Wireless Internet
2003 : $42,823
2004 : $32,923
2005 : $27,663
Category: 4103 - CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA

**Administrating Institution:** The University of Sydney

**Project Summary:**
This project proposes a new mobile electronic instrument prototype suitable for live performance of music. Recent developments in tuning theory will play an important role in the development of the prototype allowing it become a new live electronic performance medium for music. The prototype will be tested using tuning principles that have evolved in music over many centuries on every continent.

2001 (1 grant)

4103 CINEMA, ELECTRONIC ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA
DP0209550
Dr Dennis Del Favero
Prof I Howard
Adj/Prof R Gibson
Prof J Shaw

**Project Title:** The reformulation of narrative within digital cinema as the integration of three models of interactivity.
The rise of digital media has led to a decline in the use of traditional single-layered narrative and the corresponding loss of a major instrument of cinematic representation. This study investigates the reformulation of narrative within digital cinema through the integration of three models of interactivity so as to produce a new emergent digital narrative form. The study tests the proposition predicted in revisionist cinematic theory that narrative, when generated as a complex of digitally interactive forms, provides the opportunity to recapture the representational significance of narrative within digital cinema, through its enactment within a multi-layered, emergent virtual space.