



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Media release

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UNE wins research funding

Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor, has congratulated the University of New England for its winning substantial research funding from the Federal Government in the latest Australian Research Council (ARC) funding round.

Three projects totalling nearly \$700,000 over three years have been recognised under the 'Discovery' and 'Linkage' schemes of the ARC.

"I congratulate the University of New England for its continuing commitment to research as well as providing a very high quality tertiary education for its students.

It is important that the UNE encourages its staff to undertake research not only for their personal development but also to be part of leading future thinking and practices in the various fields of study that are available at the UNE," Mr Windsor said.

The successful research projects were announced by the Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Julie Bishop, in Canberra on Tuesday.

4,834 applications were received by the ARC from Australia-wide with 383 projects being successful in accessing funding.

Projects funded under Discovery schemes involve the conduct of fundamental research important to the national innovation system, including the people, processes and relationships involved in a knowledge-based economy.

Linkage funding is allocated to research projects that involve national and international partnerships between researchers and other organisations including business, industry and community organisations to secure commercial and other benefits.

Applications for ARC funding are subjected to a rigorous, independent peer review process that takes into consideration factors such as a researcher's track record and capacity to undertake the work, the significance and innovation of the proposed research program, the approach to be taken, training opportunities to be made available and national benefit.

"It is a real feather in the cap of UNE teams led by Dr Nigel Andrew, Dr Bob Boughton and Dr Peter Clarke to be recognised by their peers in being selected to undertake their projects and I look forward to seeing the projects as they develop and deliver their results for the benefit of the community," Mr Windsor said.

For further information contact Tony Windsor, Ph (02) 6761 3080 or 0427 668868

Discovery Scheme Project

Title: Ecology of insect herbivore assemblages: Influence of climate, evolutionary history and plant traits

ARC funding: \$256,000 over three years

Summary:

The results from this project will be a key reference when assessing future impacts of human-induced impacts on natural communities. Our research will provide insights into the impacts of climate change on herbivorous insects associated with Acacia: the dominant plant genus in the major climatic zones of Australia. Results and conclusions from this research will aid land-holders, government agencies and other parties in determining how important Acacia-dominated ecosystems are in conserving insect biodiversity in a range of different habitats within regional and rural Australia. Our research will also aid in a better understanding of biocontrol agents of Australian Acacia pest species here and overseas.

Contact: Dr Nigel Andrew T. 02 6773 2937 E. nigel.andrew@une.edu.au

Linkage Scheme Projects

Title: An investigation into the contribution of the national adult education system to the post-conflict reconstruction and development of East Timor

ARC funding: \$136,000 over three years

Summary:

This project will improve our understanding of the society and culture of a close neighbour, East Timor, and of the dynamics of aid and development in our region. The Australian adult education community will learn to interact more effectively with the development process in Timor, as we pilot an approach which may be applicable in other communities, particularly ones with histories of conflict and where poverty is a major issue. Funding agencies will benefit from understanding better how to target adult education aid to achieve poverty reduction and democratic development. The project will strengthen the capacity of the government of East Timor to use adult education policy to raise living standards in their country.

Contact: Dr Bob Boughton T. 02 6773 2913 E. bob.boughton@une.edu.au

Title: Fire severity, habitat heterogeneity and life histories. Resolving the persistence ability of plants in frequently fired landscapes

ARC funding: \$306,444 over three years

Summary:

The wise management of Australia's biodiversity has major economic and social benefits for the nation through the provision of ecosystem services, bio-products and tourism. Fire is a pivotal environmental factor that will continue to influence plant biodiversity in fire-prone ecosystems. Inappropriate fire regimes, however, threaten biodiversity through disruption of life cycles. If too many or too few fires occur in an area this can lead to decline and extinction of plant and animal species. This research will provide a risk-assessment tool for the management of biodiversity to reverse population declines and prevent extinctions.

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