

COMMENT



QUT's performance in the latest rounds of national competitive research grant funding is extremely encouraging, coming as it does after a period of steady and strategic capacity building across the university.

Despite our relatively recent establishment as a university, QUT has steadily progressed through the research ranks of Australia's 39 universities.

In the most recent ARC rounds, QUT is placed twelfth for Discovery research and in the top five for ARC Linkage grants.

We have also become a significant player in National Health and Medical Research Council funding.

QUT's research ranking is, to a significant extent, determined by our performance in the health field which itself dominates Australia's public support for university research.

Our position is all the more remarkable given the fact that, unlike all those ranked higher, we have no medical school, choosing instead to specialise in areas of allied and cross disciplinary health.

Closer examination of the research data shows that we have been outstandingly successful in playing to our strengths.

QUT ranks at or near the top in a variety of fields, including education, creative industries, and business, and we are in the top ten in many more, including law, mathematics, biomedical engineering and environmental engineering.

It is particularly encouraging to

see that not only have many of our recent professorial appointments led successful research grants, but that mentoring and other support approaches have helped a good number of our newer and younger academics to break into the highly competitive national research scene.

QUT is, of course, very mindful of the reality that our reputation rests on the quality of teaching and learning as well as research, and we are just as committed to excellence and building on our strengths in this domain.

While teaching is notoriously hard to measure reliably, probably the best reflection of performance comes from peer review through the national Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching.

Over the years, QUT has been among the top performers in the nation for Carrick awards, ranking second in the latest round announced earlier this month.

QUT has come a long way in a relatively short time, and we have ambitious plans for the future.

This year's successes in research and teaching are important milestones which show that we are fast establishing ourselves as a major national and international university which can challenge traditional structures and approaches while retaining a commitment to high quality and relevance to our various communities.

Professor Peter Coaldrake
Vice-Chancellor



Federal minister Mal Brough and V-C Professor Peter Coaldrake turn the first sod.

Work starts on new Caboolture centre

Caboolture campus

AN official sod turning ceremony early this month marked the start of construction of QUT's new multi-million dollar, purpose-built nursing building at Caboolture.

The building, located at QUT's Caboolture campus, will include clinical nursing laboratories and self-directed learning areas. It is due to be completed by mid 2008.

Head of campus Robert Craig said by 2009 around 180 QUT nursing students would be enrolled in the three-year Bachelor of Nursing degree at the Caboolture campus.

"This year we added the first year

of the three-year Bachelor of Nursing degree to complement our education, business and creative industries offerings," he said.

"We are delighted that we can meet the demand for the next generation of nurses and the community has certainly responded with a lot of interest."

The new nursing building, to be known as K Block, is one of a number of building projects being undertaken at the campus.

Mr Craig said QUT was committing a total of \$4.85 million to construct the nursing building, extend the newly built J Block and upgrade the campus's courtyard. The building has

received financial support from the Commonwealth Government.

"The new nursing facilities are giving a 'real' flavour to QUT's nursing degree," he said.

"It will replicate a real nursing environment and will be an invaluable resource to students."

The new nursing building will be co-located with Brisbane North Institute of TAFE and will jointly service the needs of both students from QUT and the TAFE.

Local member and federal minister Mal Brough and Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Coaldrake led the official sod turning ceremony.

- Sandra Hutchinson

Biotech award



A SENIOR executive from QUT's commercialisation company, bluebox, has been recognised as biotech's "next big thing" at the 10th annual Women in Technology awards.

Dr Paige Maguire, general manager - life sciences with bluebox, pictured above, received the Biotech Rising Star Award for her potential to make significant contributions to the future of the sector.

Women in Technology is

a Queensland network aimed at advancing women in technology industries including information communication, biotechnology and engineering.

Dr Maguire won for her own research, in addition to her work cultivating biotech research from within the university sector, and managing the commercial development of technologies in such fields as drug development, medical devices and vaccines.

Recognition for staff

QUT academic and professional staff will be rewarded for outstanding achievement through the new Vice-Chancellor's Performance Fund.

The fund, which will provide performance bonuses of between \$1000 and \$5000, was announced by QUT Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Coaldrake.

"The aim of the fund is to recognise individuals who have made a significant and superior contribution or innovation within the university," Professor Coaldrake said.

An estimated \$1.3 million will be available annually.

"The new performance-based bonuses, which are in addition to other

recognition programs already offered by QUT, respond to a staff survey in which recognition was identified as a priority area," he said.

"The university recognises that there are a number of strategies that can be utilised to ensure staff performance is acknowledged. This is one such initiative."

Professor Coaldrake said at least 50 per cent of the performance fund would be directed to frontline teaching and learning staff or those who provide direct support to these areas.

He said payments would be made twice a year, with calls for nominations in February and August.

Career opportunities for young academics

APPLICATIONS have opened for QUT's early career academic program, which gives up-and-coming scholars the chance to climb the university career ladder.

In a bid to address its ageing population and boost the university's research and teaching strengths, QUT is offering 24 positions to candidates starting out in their academic careers.

QUT's director of human resources, Graham MacAulay, said QUT was the only university in Australia with a dedicated Early Career Academic Recruitment and Development (ECARD) program for those new to academia.

"Since its launch in 2005, 13 academics from the ECARD program have been promoted within QUT," he said.

"This program is opening the door to new opportunities for young academics who are keen to work their way up the

university career ladder."

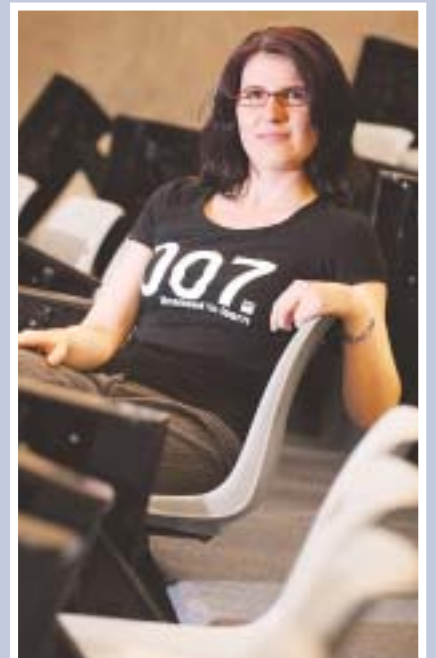
One of those to benefit is Dr Laura Gregory, who since completing the program has been promoted to the position of lecturer in the Faculty of Science.

"For me the program has really opened doors and given me great opportunities within QUT," she said.

The one-year program provides academics with a comprehensive suite of skills, knowledge and abilities to ensure a successful academic career, as well as support and opportunities to develop strong networking and collaborative relationships.

There are currently ECARD positions available for 2008 in built environment and engineering, business, creative industries, education, health, law and science.

For more information visit www.jobs.qut.com



Dr Laura Gregory earned a promotion after completing QUT's early career academic program.