



# Directing the Centre for Sustainable Regional Futures

Coral Pepper

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# Background

## Centre for Sustainable Regional Futures

- Developed in late 2006 on ECU SW Campus (RPS)
- Faculty for Regional Professional Studies
- Unique structure organised around learning programs (Education, Nursing, Social Work, Arts, Business, Surf Science & Computing) rather than schools
- ~1500 students (700 EFTSL), ~120 staff (30 academics), ~46 hectares
- Campus forms part of Bunbury Education Precinct, co-located with a Senior College, Regional Technical College (TAFE) and two teaching hospitals

# Faculty of Regional Professional Studies



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- History
  - 2007/2008 M/C Membership 4 (Chair RPS, Director, Co-Director, Rep) 3 support staff, open to all staff, 19 publications
  - 2008/2009 M/C Membership 5 (Chair, Director, Co-Director, 2 reps) 2 support staff, open to all staff, 26 publications, Director resigned, Dean coordinated
  - 2009/2010 M/C Membership 4 (Chair, 6 members) Acting Director appointed M/C Membership 12 (Director, 11 members), based 20 publications, Operational Excellence
  - 2010/2011 M/C Membership 12 (Director, 11 members), 8 publications (2 professors retired/resigned ) Acting director resigned
  - 2011 M/C Membership 12 (Director, 11 members), 5 publications, CP Acting Director, residential writing retreat, research newsletters, Academics Anonymous

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## ECU 4 strategic priorities

- SP 3 developing research focus, depth and impact
- 5 goals within SP 3
  - build areas of research concentration, depth and sustainability
  - **Increase research collaboration within and external to ECU**
  - Stimulate knowledge transfer and commercialisation
  - **Strengthen research culture, training and support**
  - **Increase research higher degree student enrolments and completions**

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## Role of CSRF

- To advance research profile of RPS by enhancing research prospects at local, national, international level
- Two goals shape Strategic Plan
  - Increase quality research and creative productivity in RPS  
(attract research staff, increase research grants/funds, improve teaching/research nexus, develop scholarship of engagement)
  - Develop a vibrant, inclusive and sustainable research culture  
(develop collaborative research projects/mentoring opportunities, facilitate development of individual researchers and collaborative RPS research teams, enhance/promote research strengths, strengthen inter-professional and intra-faculty links, address sustainability agenda)



# Current research on campus

- 7 programs on ECU SW Campus, 17 members of Centre
- Business
  - 1 MEd staff
  - Research project
    - Sport, recreation and cultural needs and preferences of staff and students at ECU SW (Faculty funding with Education)
- Computer Technology
  - 1PhD staff
- Creative Industries
  - 5 PhD students
- Surf Science
  - 1 PhD staff

# Current research on campus

- Education
  - 3 PhD staff
  - Research Projects
    - A Cultural Geography of the Leschenault Estuary (ECU funded)
    - Sustainability in Research Across ECU (unfunded)
    - 'Just in time-just for me' narrative support for unit coordinators (Australian Learning and Teaching Council)
    - International leadership project (unfunded)
    - Investing in Social Workers in primary schools (funding sought)
  - 3 PhD students
- Nursing
  - 1 PhD staff
  - Research Project
    - Theory to practice (ECU funded)
- Social Work
  - 3 PhD staff
  - Research Project
    - Mental Health Carers Assessment tool (unfunded)

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- Current (2012)
  - CP ongoing, 2 year contract Director CSRF, Membership – working party to reduce management committee to 4/5
  - model research activity
  - campaign to increase membership (incl HDR)
  - strengthen links with other ECU faculties/research centres
  - campaign to broaden research focus
  - international guest speakers 1X semester
  - monthly research training opportunities (ORI, GRS)
  - annual residential writing retreat, research forum
  - develop academics anonymous group
  - support post grad group
  - strengthen communication-semester newsletters, local newspaper

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- Challenges/opportunities
  - low research output
  - low number of research academics/high ECR
  - low number of externally funded projects
  - unfunded projects
  - many satisfied with ‘teaching only’
  - perceived high teaching loads
  - Formation of CSRF industry reference group
  - strong Faculty support for conference presentations (esp. international),
  - networking with research colleagues (inc. international)
  - VC champions sustainability (all forms)

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- Questions: