

# Building peer assistance capacity in faculties to improve student satisfaction of units

## PEER ASSISTED TEACHING SCHEME (PATS)

*TEACHERS HELPING TEACHERS  
BUILDING QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION UNITS*

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# Presentation Overview

- Teaching and Unit Quality measures in Higher Education
- Quality enhancement process
  - Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme (PATS)
  - Implementation of the project
  - Data collection and analysis
  - Future works

# Quality Measures

## **Student Evaluations (National)**

Australian Graduate Survey that comprises of two components:

- Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ)
- Graduate Destination Survey (GDS)

## **Student Evaluations (Monash University)**

- Monash Experience Questionnaire (MEQ)
- Student Evaluation of Teaching and Unit (SETU) instrument

# Student Evaluations of Teaching and Units

## -- Unit Evaluation questions

Item 1: The unit enabled me to achieve its learning objectives

Item 2: I found the unit to be intellectually stimulating

Item 3: The learning resources in this unit supported my studies

Item 4: The feedback I received in this unit was helpful

**Item 5: Overall I was satisfied with the quality of this unit**

*Responses use a 5 point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1) with 3 representing "Neutral". Options for Not Applicable (6) and Don't Know (7) are also provided to respondents but are not counted in the means for questions.*

# Monash Unit Evaluation Indicators

Colour Code	Interpretation	Unit Measure	Characteristics of unit response distribution	Targets
	Outstanding	“overall” item median $\geq 4.7$	A considerable majority of responses are “strongly agree”	5% of units have medians $\geq 4.7$
	Meeting aspirations	“overall” item median between 3.6 - 4.69	Responses are generally above “neutral”, the great majority are “agree” or “strongly agree”	80% of units fall in this band
	Needing improvement	“overall” item median between 3.01 – 3.59	Responses are generally “neutral” or bimodal with no clear trend	10% of units fall in this band
	Needing critical attention	“overall” item median $\leq 3.0$	Responses generally below “neutral”, majority “disagree” or “strongly disagree”	5% of units have medians $\leq 3.0$

# Unit Evaluation Ranking of Faculties at Monash

## Faculty of Information Technology Semester 1 Rankings

- 2008 ranked 9/10 (mean 3.61, Uni 3.79)\*
- 2009 ranked 6/10 (median 3.91, Uni 3.94)
- 2010 ranked 7/10 (median 3.93, Uni 3.96)

## Faculty of Information Technology Semester 2 Rankings

- 2008 ranked 8/10 (mean 3.68, Uni 3.78)\*
- 2009 ranked 8/10 (median 3.90 Uni 3.94)
- **2010 ranked 6/10 (median 3.95, Uni 3.99)**

\* In 2008 only mean values were reported. From 2009 median values were reported as the mean was deemed not an appropriate measure of central tendency.

## Faculty Rankings in Semester 2, 2010

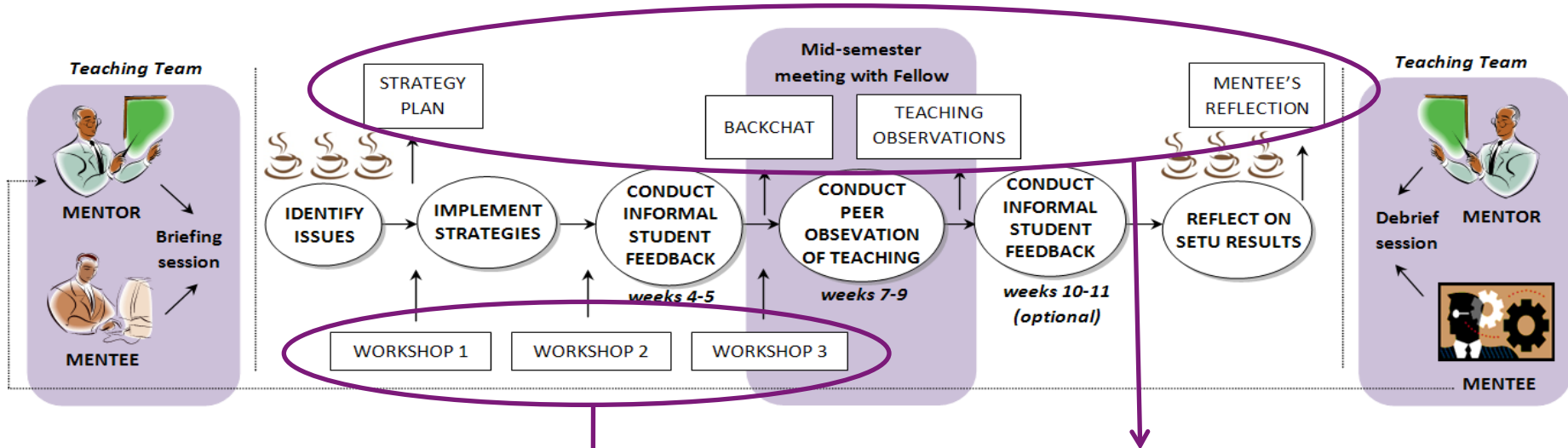
Faculty	Response Rate	Median
Arts	38.84%	4.11
Law	49.00%	4.04
Art & Design	48.89%	3.99
Business & Economics	47.69%	3.99
University	46.04%	3.99
Science	53.03%	3.98
Information Technology	43.73%	3.95
Education	45.75%	3.95
Pharmacy	30.73%	3.93
Engineering	46.60%	3.92
Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences	49.37%	3.92

# What is the Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme?



- A program where two or more colleagues collaborate in helping to improve the quality of teaching and student satisfaction within identified units
- Aims:
  - To improve student satisfaction with the quality of units
  - To build leadership capacity using currently recognised outstanding teachers as critical friends and mentors

# The PATS Process



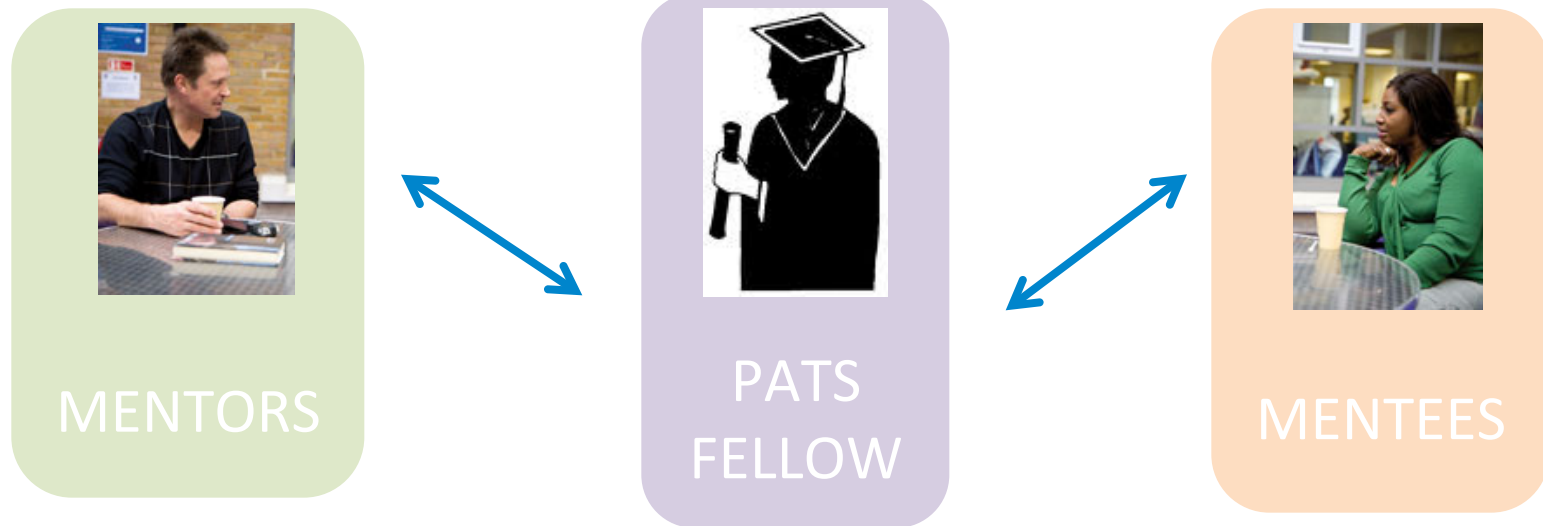
## Workshops:

1. Interactive Lecturing
2. Planning Your Teaching
3. Peer Observation of Teaching

## Deliverables:

1. Strategy Plan
2. Backchat
3. Peer Observation of Teaching
4. Critical Reflection

# Brief



- Prior to semester starting
  - Partnering is established by School/Faculty
  - Introduce the participants to the scheme
  - Focus on improving the health of the unit not teaching
  - Issue coffee vouchers

# Step 1: Identifying issues



- Prior to semester starting
  - Partners meet over coffee to discuss and identify 3-4 key issues they wish to improve on over the semester
  - Partners devise strategies to overcome issues

# Step 2: Strategies

## Outcome: strategy plan

*Example of an **issue**:*

1. **Lecturer communication and delivery** - clarity of speech and slide presentation, etc. Including use of filler "umms" and "like"
2. **Information density** - "too many equations" - this seems to mean both too much content being covered, AND that lots of equations are in each section of the content

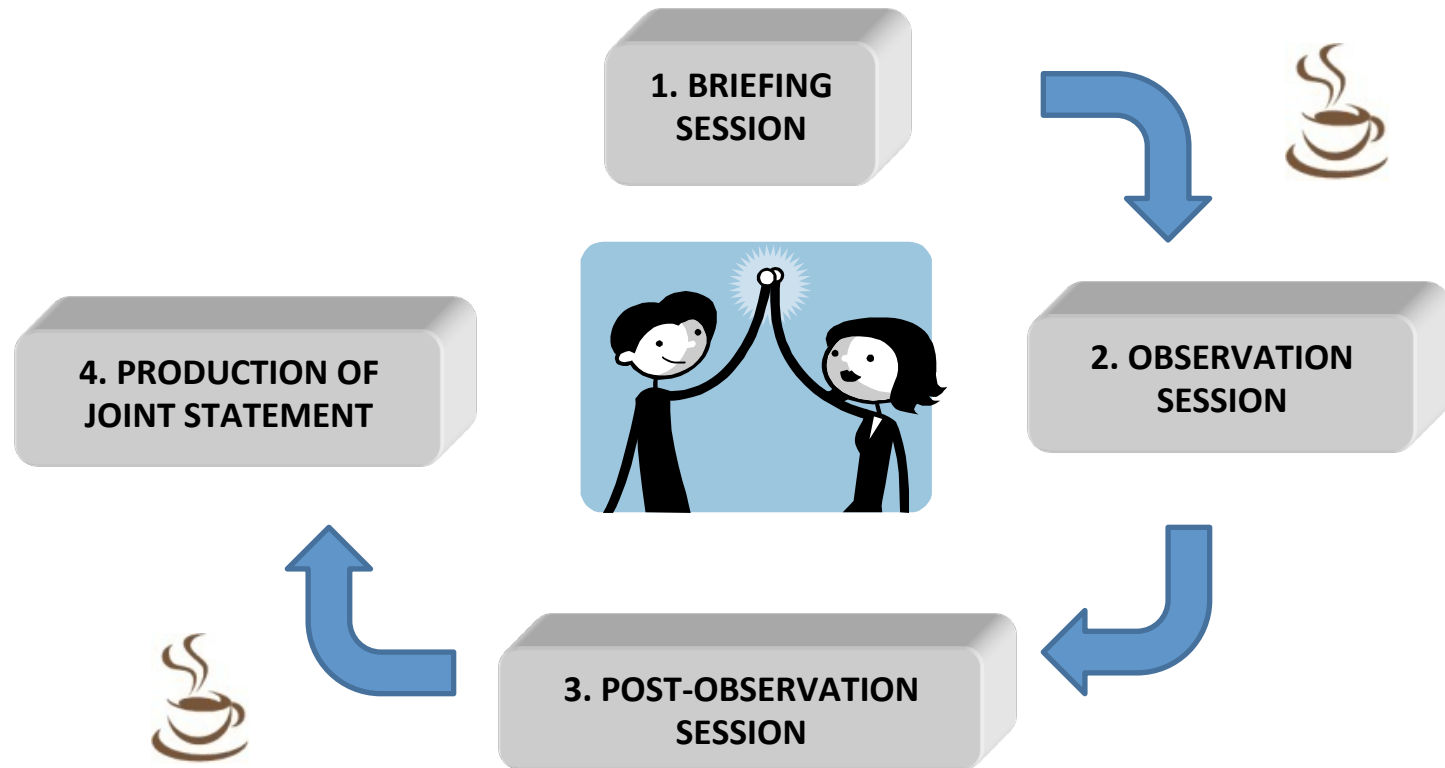
*Example of a **strategy**:*

1. **Lecturer communication** - recording the lectures to hear yourself afterwards
2. **Information density** - by reducing some of the content, spreading out the remaining topics to be less rushed, and making some initial modifications to the slides for clarity/emphasis





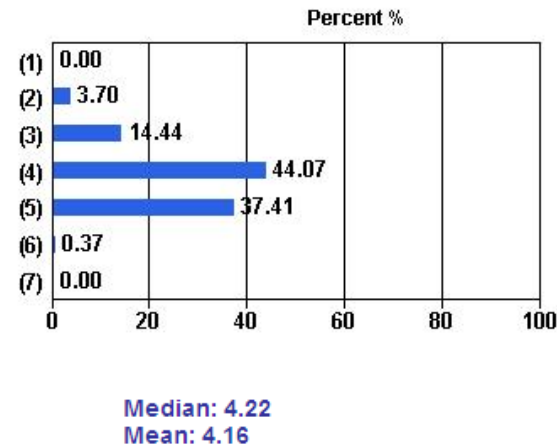
# Step 4: Peer Observation of Teaching



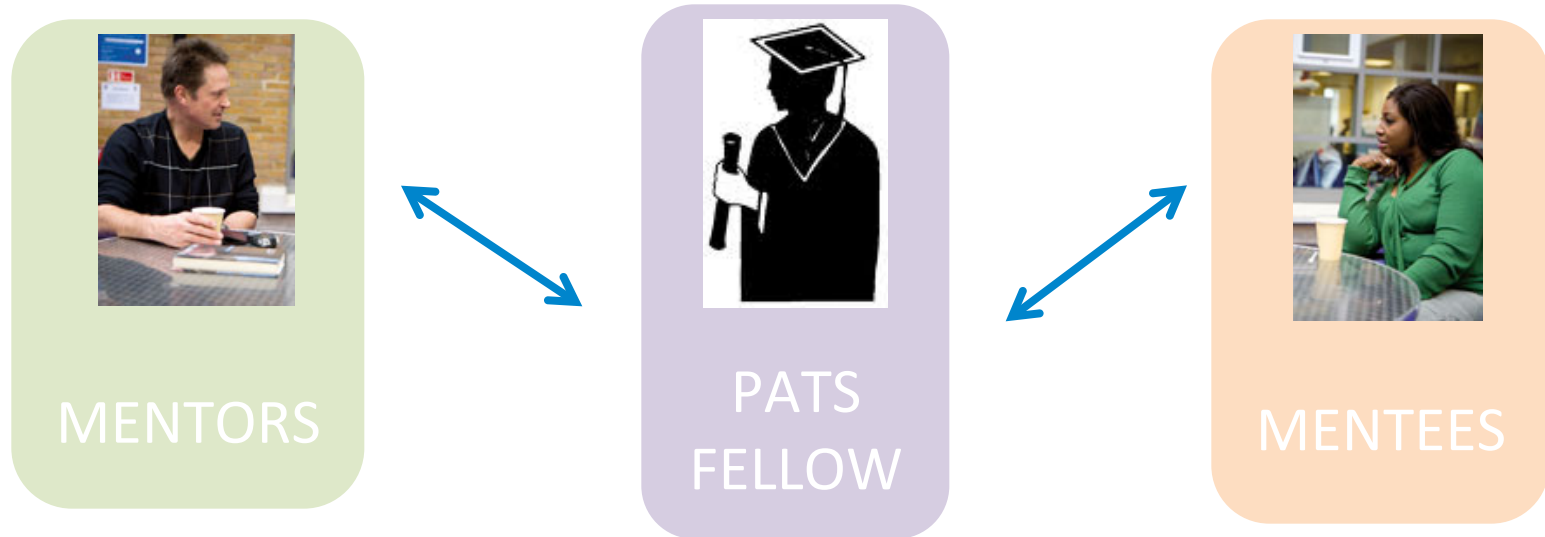
# Step 5: Critical reflection

- After semester concludes
  - Reflect on changes, working with peer, informal student feedback, peer review and final unit evaluation – focussing again on students' perceptions of units

Response Scale	Responses	Percent
(1) Strongly disagree	0	0.00%
(2) Disagree	10	3.70%
(3) Neutral	39	14.44%
(4) Agree	119	44.07%
(5) Strongly agree	101	37.41%
(6) Not applicable	1	0.37%
(7) Don't know	0	0.00%
Total (N)	270	100.00%



# Debrief



- After semester concludes
  - Participants discuss experience in the process, ways to improve the scheme for future participants, and closure to the scheme
  - Mentees may provide mentoring (building leadership capacity)

# Phases of project implementation

- **Pilot study** – implemented in the Faculty of Information Technology (2008-2009)
- **Phase 1** – extended the scheme to the Physical Science cluster of Monash University (FIT, Eng, Sci) (2009-2010)
- **Phase 2** – extended the scheme to all remaining clusters of Monash University (2010-2011)

# Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected via three different methods:

- Unit Evaluation results
- Surveyed participants
- Focus Group sessions

# Unit Evaluation Results – The pilot study

Pilot – Faculty of Information Technology 2008-2009

Unit	Semester	Median	#Enr	#Resp
FIT1	S2, 2008	2.86	59	25
	S1, 2009	4.33	20	16
FIT2	S2, 2008	2.11	38	20
	S1, 2009	3.5	30	12
FIT3	S2, 2008	2.95	57	23
	S1, 2009	3.56	49	25
FIT4	S2, 2008	2.5	24	7
	S1, 2009	3.67	30	5
FIT5*	S1, 2009	4.36	25	16

Moved into meeting aspirations  
 Moved into needs improvements

\* FIT5 was a new unit taught in 2009; while the lecturer had not taught the unit before he wanted to be involved in PATS because his previous unit was flagged as needing critical attention (Median: 2.95, Mean: 2.83 (112 students enrolled, 29 responses)).

# Unit Evaluation Results – Phase 1

Phase 1 – Physical Science Cluster (IT, ENG, SCI) 2009-2010

Unit	Semester	Median	#Enr	#Resp
FIT6	S1, 2009	3	59	25
	S1, 2010	2.92	20	16
FIT7	S1, 2009	3	38	20
	S1, 2010	3.28	30	12
FIT8	S1, 2009	2.5	57	23
	S1, 2010	4.3	49	25
ENG1	S2, 2009	1.75	104	29
	S2, 2010	2.56	123	48
ENG2	S2, 2009	2	29	9
	S2, 2010	4.1	27	6
SCI1	S2, 2009	3	7	5
	S2, 2010	3.5	2	2
SCI2	S2, 2009	3.14	79	51
	S2, 2010	2.93	72	12

Moved into needs improvement

Moved into meeting aspirations

Remained in critical attention zone

# Surveys – Areas for improvement

Students commented on the following areas:

- **Lectures** – *content, slides, alignment with tutorials*
- **Lecturers** – *presentation, interaction, consultation*
- **Feedback** – *insufficient*
- **Resources** – *textbooks, guides, notes*
- **Tutorials** – *structure, use of time*
- **Tutors** – *teaching*
- **Assessment** – *specifications, tasks*

Ethics approval has been recently obtained to analyse unit evaluation qualitative comments for units needing critical attention

# Focus group sessions - PATS in a word



# Focus group sessions – Opportunities and Challenges



## Opportunities

- Building leadership/mentoring capacity
- Coffee vouchers to build supportive, collegial relationship with colleagues within faculty
- Places more priority on teaching can lead to improved teaching practice
- Improving quality of higher education, better student experience

- Partnering process
  - Time consuming
  - Feeling stigmatised
- Requires total dedication from both partners to be successful
  - More workload

## Challenges



# Unit Evaluation Results – Phase 2

Phase 2 – University Wide 2010-2011

Unit	Semester	Median	#Enr	#Resp
ART1	S1, 2010	2.33	35	19
ART2	S1, 2010	4.5	18	8
BUS1	S1, 2010	2.88	91	47
EDU1	S1, 2010	3.11	65	39
EDU2	S1, 2010	3.11	65	39
EDU3	S1, 2010	3.93	24	12
ENG1	S1, 2010	3.65	64	19
FIT1	S1, 2010	3.28	93	26
FIT2	S1, 2010	3.56	70	19
FIT3	S1, 2010	NEW UNIT		
PHM1	S1, 2010	3.98	246	77
PHM2	S1, 2010	4.17	24	6
PHM3	S1, 2010	NEW UNIT		
PHM4	S1, 2010	3.91	190	72

Phase 2 of the scheme is currently in progress with the following faculties participating:

- *Arts (4 participants)*
- *Business and Economics (2 participants)*
- *Education (6 participants)*
- *Engineering (2 participants)*
- *Information Technology (6 participants)*
- *Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (4 participants)*

In 2011, the scheme has been opened up to all faculties at Monash University.

# Proposed Outcomes

- A **consistent and university-wide strategy**/policy to assist academics to improve units that need critical attention
- Identification of perceived **challenges and opportunities** for the development of PATS as a mechanism to improve quality of teaching in Higher Education
- **Improved teaching practice and student experience**, and improved unit and course evaluations
- **Dissemination of good practice** both within and across discipline areas, through wide distribution of reporting and publications
- Embedded **acknowledgement**
  - in “most improved unit from each cluster” into Monash’s Teaching Excellence Award process
  - development of previous award winners’ and outstanding teachers’ skills
- **Embedding the process** into the Monash University Graduate Certificate of Higher Education (GCHE)



# Future Works

- Development of set of generic resources so scheme can be implemented at other higher education institutions.
- Development of a PATS guide
- Development of a PATS manual/instruction kit
- Building a website to contain all the generic PATS resources (newsletters, one-page flyer, guides, instruction kit)
- Planning workshops across National (ACE 2012, HERDSA 2012, ACDICT 2012)
- **ALTC Teaching Fellowship Symposium**  
Peer Assisted Educational Programs  
Monash University, Tuesday 7th June 2011
- <http://opvclt.monash.edu.au/educational-excellence/peerassistedteachingscheme/index.html>

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## External members

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Ms Katherine Lindsay	<i>The University of Newcastle</i>
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Dr Jane Skalicky	<i>University of Tasmania</i>
Dr Wendy Sutherland-Smith	<i>Deakin University</i>
Associate Professor Susan Edwards	<i>Australian Catholic University</i>

## Monash University - Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Fellows reference group

Professor Marnie Hughes-Warrington	<i>Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)</i>
Professor Peter Stewart	<i>Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences</i>
Ms Catherine Barrett	<i>Faculty of Business and Economics</i>
Mr Adrian Devey	<i>Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)</i>
Ms Lisa Smith	<i>Monash Library</i>

## 2010 Monash PAL Fellows

Dr Jane Bone	<i>Faculty of Education</i>
Ms Jill French	<i>Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences</i>
Dr Yvonne Hodgson	<i>Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences</i>
Dr Gerry Rayner	<i>Faculty of Science</i>

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