

## The University of Southern Queensland

The University of Southern Queensland (USQ) is located on 78.7 hectares of scenic parkland just 7 kms from the city centre of Toowoomba. Toowoomba is Australia's "Garden City", has a growing population of over 90,000 and is within comfortable driving distance of the State's capital city, Brisbane, and the Gold and Sunshine Coasts. The University also has a campus in Brisbane and Wide Bay, a fast growing region of Queensland. A new campus in Springfield will open from 2006.

The University of Southern Queensland is an exciting, rapidly developing university with over 25,000 students, nearly three-quarters are studying by distance education. High quality and innovative teaching programs combined with flexible delivery have earned USQ a reputation as a progressive university.

## RUBRIC Project

The RUBRIC (Regional Universities Building Research Infrastructure Collaboratively) project is funded by the Australian Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) under the Systemic Infrastructure Initiative (SII) from 2005 - 2007. The Minister's Press Release can be viewed online at the URL <http://www.dest.gov.au/Ministers/Media/Nelson/2005/08/n1173220805.asp>

Further information about the RUBRIC project in relation to other projects funded under the SII is available online at the URL:

[http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research\\_sector/policies\\_issues\\_reviews/key\\_issues/australian\\_research\\_information\\_infrastructure\\_committee/documents/outcomes\\_call\\_for\\_proposals\\_doc.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/policies_issues_reviews/key_issues/australian_research_information_infrastructure_committee/documents/outcomes_call_for_proposals_doc.htm)

USQ is the lead institution on the project and the majority of project positions will be based at the Toowoomba campus. All project positions will be actively involved in working with the USQ community and project partners and will participate in broader forums and conferences with the higher education community from time to time.

USQ is partnered by the University of New England, the University of the Sunshine Coast, the University of Newcastle (cross-sectoral partner, liaison for IRUA) and Massey University in New Zealand (international partner).

The RUBRIC Project has two components, one focusing on Repository Infrastructure and the second supporting the national contribution to the e-Framework for Education and Research, a joint initiative of DEST and JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) in the UK.

The RUBRIC bid was submitted to DEST in May 2005 and aimed at "Maximising access to digital resources in Australian universities, especially regional universities" with the premise that regional and smaller universities have a need to access, manage and disseminate research information and learning resources in much the same way as the large established research universities but often face significant challenges in establishing appropriate infrastructure.

The repositories component of the project aims to meet the needs of smaller and regional universities by developing sustainable infrastructure for the deployment of best practice

emerging from the SII projects known as FRODO (Federated Repositories of Digital Objects).

First, the project aims to implement best practice at USQ to clarify implementation issues surrounding repository based research infrastructure in regional Australia and, most importantly, to build capability. Second, the project will provide a vehicle for an assisted take-up service with other regional universities. The inclusion of the University of Newcastle as an IRUA representative in this partnership will provide a strategic and operational link into other non-regional collaborations. They share the need to expose their research but encounter difficulties similar to regionals when compared with larger Universities. The University of Newcastle will apply RUBRIC defined practices within the IRUA consortium, with Macquarie University, Murdoch University and Flinders University having pledged cooperation.

Overall, the proposal will build capability across smaller research universities enabling the research output of those institutions to be available trans-nationally, contributing to the research mission of higher education in Australia and internationally through collaboration with New Zealand partners.

The e-Framework component of the project provides a focus for the national contribution to the e-Framework for Education and Research, an initiative by the UK's JISC, Australia's DEST and partners to produce an evolving and sustainable, open standards based, service oriented technical framework to support the education and research communities. The e-Framework supports a service oriented approach to developing and delivering education, research and management information systems. Such an approach aims to maximise the flexibility and cost effectiveness with which systems can be deployed in an institutional context, both nationally and internationally. More information on the e-Framework can be found at [www.e-framework.org](http://www.e-framework.org).

## Acronyms

ADL	Advanced Distributed Learning
ARROW	Australian Research Repositories Online to the World
FRED	Federated Repositories for Education
FRODO	Federated Repositories of Digital Objects
ICE	Integrated Content Environment
IMS Australia	Regional node of the IMS Global Learning Consortium
IRUA	Innovative Research Universities Australia
PILIN	Persistent Identifier Linking Infrastructure
RUBRIC	Regional Universities Building Research Infrastructure Collaboratively

