Project name: Henry Halloran Trust

Project Owner: The Vice Chancellor and Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost
Introduction

The HHT identified as part of its strategic plan a need to focus its research efforts in particular strategic areas.

Whilst it will continue to fund a Blue Sky Research Grants program, the Trust has identified another model to help direct research in particular research areas — what the Trust is calling a Research Incubator. The role of the incubator is to assist a talented teaching and research academic to focus their efforts on a major research project, with the assistance of small team partly funded by the Trust. With the generous support of the Vice Chancellor, the Trust is able to fund a research incubator for three years commencing in 2016. The main principle of the incubator is to allow a University of Sydney teaching and research academic to work full time on a research project of interest to the Trust in association with a team of researchers.

The Trust, in its Strategic Plan, has identified the following areas of research in relation to its strategic plan:

In particular, the Trust would like to focus on the key issue of infrastructure. One of the challenges in this space is not so much the infrastructure hardware or engineering but the challenges of putting this infrastructure into place – what could be called infrastructure implementation. This area is one of the greatest challenges for the 21st century as the world grapples with the challenges of accelerating urbanism.

Moreover, whilst this infrastructure includes physical infrastructure such as roads and railway lines it also includes a range of other infrastructure that a modern city needs to function effectively. The additional list could include:

- Infostructure
  What are the opportunities provided by new technologies, especially smartphones, to improve the performance of our urban infrastructure?

- Engagement infrastructure
  What means are available for citizens to become involved in dialogues aimed at improving the range of opportunities available and accessible to communities?

- Planning infrastructure
  Does the planning system operate in a way to maximise planning benefits and reduce transaction costs? In particular the Trust is interested in exploring the efficiency and effectiveness of processes that are generating new land and housing development opportunities in Australia and whether practical implementation alternatives exist.
• Housing infrastructure
Does the housing system operate effectively and efficiently? Who is missing out in the housing market and what impact is this having on our cities? What might be some alternative policies?

• Research infrastructure
How can we best measure the performance of our urban areas and the operation of our planning systems. How can our citizens participate in this research measurement?

In addressing these questions of infrastructure we need to examine how cities have developed infrastructure and engage with it, and how they are reacting to the challenges of urbanism. Making good future decisions about cities will also include knowing about what has happened with past decisions. These city cases could come from examining the causes of success and failure in cities over past millennia, the 19th century history of urban development (for example in Sydney and New York), and recent attempts to introduce new policies.

Total funding of up to $300,000 will be available over the three years. The Trust considers that a team including a post-doc and a PhD student may best assist the work of the incubator. However, the Trust will also consider other configurations (eg the postdoc might be replaced by an Associate Investigator with a teaching buyout).

Other bids might have a larger amount for research funds and leverage additional faculty funds to help fund a postdoc. The final proposed budget will be at the discretion of the CI. The Trust will just need to be convinced that the proposal is viable.

The incubators will be partnerships between the University and the Trust and consist of small teams. The Trust is most interested in evaluating the performance of the Chief Investigator but incubator bids might also like to identify other associate investigators who will work on the project. These associate investigators might be from the University of Sydney or from other Universities¹.

The Trust is very interested in leveraging other funds to assist with the development of the Research Incubators. The ability of the incubator bids to leverage other funds is an important criterion which the Trust will consider when assessing proposals.

¹ Note that the Trust will not fund travel costs of any associate investigators from other Universities.
The Application Process

In order to cut down the work for applicants, the application for the Trust’s Research Incubator grants will be a two step process. As part of Stage 1 of the application process you will need to:

1. Introduce the research program you would like to complete as part of the incubator project.
2. Identify the research questions you are trying to address. Why are these important questions? Describe the likely impact of your work if you were funded and your project was successfully completed.

(Note: the total word limit for 1. and 2. combined is 750 words)

3. Identify what level of commitment you anticipate obtaining from your faculty and/or other sources to support your research incubator.
4. Provide a two page CV of the chief investigator and any associate investigators.

Short-listed proposals will be asked in stage 2 of the application process to:

5. Produce an executive summary of the research incubator program background paper;
6. Prepare advertisements for the PhD scholarship and the Postdoc and the practitioner-in-residence
7. Outline a broad schedule for your program.
8. Identify the main risks in your program and what you would do to mitigate them
9. Describe a research dissemination strategy for your program.
10. Obtain a formal letter of support from your Head of School/Dean or AD(R) and/or other funders confirming the funding identified in Stage 1 of the application.
11. Describe a detailed budget for your project including additional funding

Note we anticipate that the advertisement of the PhD student and the post doc would occur immediately after the grant is established. The other task that the Chief Investigator would be asked to complete in 2016 would be to prepare a Research Incubator Program Background Paper 10 weeks after the award of the grant. This

2 Note that your unit would be asked to fund the advertisements
would be a short paper which could be used to introduce your project to a range of stakeholders. It would include:

- Introduction/ context
- Review of literature
- Research questions

Note that teaching relief can commence in second semester of 2016.

**Selection criteria**

1. Alignment of the research questions with the strategic plan of the Trust (please read before preparing your submission)
2. The quality and potential of the chief investigator\(^3\)
3. The additional resources that the application can identify besides the investment of the Trust
4. The quality of the application
5. The quality of the executive summary of the background paper

The judging panel will include academic members of the Advisory Board, Professor Ann Forsyth, the Academic Advisor to the Trust and a member of the University Research Office. Note that shortlisted applicants may be asked to attend an interview as part of the selection process.

\(^3\) Note that Level E staff (at the time of the application) are not eligible to apply.
Appendix B. Guidelines
Practitioner-in-Residence Program

The Practitioner in Residence Program allows an experienced practitioner to undertake a period of supported research in residence at the University working on a project that is of interest to the Trust. The practitioner is supervised by an academic and writes a short and accessible paper at the conclusion of their residency. In addition, each “graduating” practitioner will deliver a public lecture on their findings.

This is meant to be a short term project – usually a two to three month period, which is unlikely to be full time (good practitioners’ would be unable to spend too long away from their day job). As a result we are looking for topics/interests that are well formed, and where the practitioner has a specific interest or aptitude. If someone wants to commence researching a “new” project they should enrol in a research degree, not become a practitioner-in-residence.

On the other hand we aren’t interested in a project where the practitioner does not want to engage with the literature or existing scholarship. If they just want to spend some time writing down what is in their head (aka as a soapbox piece), they should simply take their laptop on a vacation.

Supervision:

The practitioner will be supervised by the Co-ordinator of the program, Dr Michael Bounds. This would usually involve weekly meetings.

At the commencement of their residency, training in the use of the University’s online journal collection will be provided.
During the tenure of the practitioner they will also deliver a work in progress seminar at the Urban Planning and Policy Research seminar (at 5 pm on the first Wednesday of the month).

Fieldwork is not encouraged. If undertaken it will require ethics approval.

**The output**

A good final paper will:

- Highlight from the practitioner’s perspective why the issue/topic is important;
- Background and document the “current state of play” in planning practice looking at both local and non-local examples;
- Provide a concise but comprehensive discussion about what light the scholarly literature can shine on the issue;
- Make some suggestions about further research in the area.

It will be about 20-30 pages in length, written using the Trust’s document template.

Dr Bounds will review a draft of the final paper. His comments should be used to write the final version of the paper. The final paper will also be reviewed by two University of Sydney academics – their comments should also be used to finalise the paper.

**Payment:**

Where the practitioner has no other full time income an honorarium will be negotiated. This will be less than a wage and certainly will not reflect professional consulting rates. Where the practitioner is working full time, an arrangement will be negotiated with their employer. The standard rate is $10,000 paid at the completion of the project.

**Selection criteria**

1. Experience/standing of the practitioner;
2. A well-formed research proposal that can be delivered in 2-3 months
3. A demonstrated connection to scholarship
4. The relevance of the topic for the Trust and the profession (eg would anyone attend a public lecture on the topic).