

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Uni network removing roadblocks to research completion**

Innovative Research Universities Australia (IRU Australia) is backing an innovative program designed to help PhD and Masters researchers complete their studies.

The *Complete PhD Program*, an award-winning scheme developed by psychologists Hugh Kearns and Maria Gardiner at Flinders University, gets right to the human heart of the key factors that impact on completion, such as perfectionism, fear of failure, procrastination and writer's block.

IRU Australia Director Lenore Cooper said member universities – James Cook, Griffith, Newcastle, La Trobe, Flinders and Murdoch – were collectively providing funding to make the *Complete PhD Program* available to their 6200 PhD and Masters by Research candidates.

“The government has recognised that Australia has fewer PhDs and fewer researchers per thousand workers than the best in Asia, Europe and North America,” Ms Cooper said.

“Federal Budget measures to improve student income support will help to attract more research degree candidates. In addition, universities must adopt new approaches to retain students and support them through to completion,” she said.

“The *Complete PhD Program* sets a new benchmark for innovation in research training.”

Hugh Kearns, who with Maria Gardiner developed the *Complete PhD Program* in 2002, said sheer talent is not always enough to lead to the successful completion of research projects.

“More often than not, the impediments to the completion of a PhD are in the way the candidate thinks about their work – that their theses should be the last word on a subject; that they have no one to turn to; that they’ll start writing after checking one more source,” Mr Kearns said.

“Our 12 week program of masterclasses, workshops and intensive support has been very successful in training higher degree researchers to undo the thinking that ultimately interferes with their research goals,” Maria Gardiner said.

Flinders University clinical psychologist Dr Alicia Ellis found the program invaluable.

“Having the opportunity to be part of this program assisted me in completing my PhD with less stress and more clarity, on time! I learned a lot about factors that had hampered my progress along the way and now use the skills I learned in my professional life and current research,” Dr Ellis said.

Dr Anna Granston from Murdoch University concurred.

“As a ‘self –sabotager’ I had a list of excuses that read like a roll call, hindering my progress. By the conclusion of the master class I felt confident and inspired. I completed my thesis in much less than the six months that I thought I’d need,” Dr Granston said.

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