



Research Directions

Office of Research Services

Engaging Humanities and Social Sciences

Professor Bob Hodge from the Centre for Cultural Research is exploring the practical uses of interdisciplinary humanities and social sciences. This ARC Discovery grant will focus on how these fields of knowledge can be put to practical use in community engagement and problem solving.



The research will build stronger links between the humanities and social science disciplines and science based disciplines. In particular, the project will facilitate collaboration between humanities scholars and government, industry and community, building a more flexible tool kit of methods and ideas for problem solving, and fostering strategies and attitudes of collaboration.

Professor Hodge says 'this project will develop the theory and practice of "Mode 2 Knowledge" (interdisciplinary; working with multiple partners; problem-solving oriented) in the humanities and social sciences. It will use chaos theory as a catalyst to introduce fresh perspectives into humanities research – in particular, collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches. Importantly, the research will develop these ideas by working with issues and problems from the local community.'

Analysis of acute and unforeseen problems in real-life situations using chaos theory perspectives will be an important outcome of the project. Professor Hodge will also explore ways of incorporating critical theories from other disciplines such as economics, sciences and mathematics into humanities and social sciences. The scope of individual projects will emerge out of collaborations with a range of partners, from business, government and the community, discovering through practice what aspects of humanities and social sciences in what kind of mix will work best to address complex and urgent problems.

The study is expected to enhance national innovation systems by building the capacity of humanities and social science researchers to work collaboratively to contribute meaningful and practical solutions to social and cultural problems, and strengthen key elements of Australia's social and economic fabric by incorporating a wider range of interests into major decisions at local and regional levels.

Project Title: *Putting humanities to work in a chaotic world: dynamic interdisciplinarity and community engagement*

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