



Centre for
Data Science

Director's Report

**Steering Committee
Meeting**

9 October 2023

Strategy

1. Review of Strategic Plan

Following the previous meeting the strategic plan was further updated to include comments from the steering committee and the scientific advisory committee in addition to the previously updated feedback that was collected at the 2022 CDS Showcase. This updated plan was included in the submission as part of the 2023 external review of the Centre.

2. Focus on collaboration

A primary strategic aim of the Centre remains to increase opportunities for collaborative research in data science which is facilitated through many of the Centre's strategies and initiatives.

Following the external review and impacts of the new budget model, the Centre is reviewing how to maintain collaborative research through equal attribution across QUT Centres, Schools and Faculties.

The Centre remains committed to creating meaningful collaborations with external entities. These include research partners, leaders, members of the Australian Data Science Network, and the Queensland AI Hub.

Through the Australian Data Science Network, the Centre is supporting the UN Datathon by hosting a satellite event here at QUT in early November. 30 people from ADSN partner organisations are expected on campus to participate in the event, alongside 10 Centre members.

3. Promotion of equity and diversity

The promotion of equity and diversity in data science continues to be a key strategy in creating an active and inclusive representation of Data Science across QUT. Our funding schemes (e.g., PhD top-ups, First Byte grants) continue to explicitly seek and consider information about the potential for the student-supervisor-project combination to promote diversity and inclusion.

i. **Women in Data Science**

Following the Centre's participation in the Women in Data Science (WiDS) initiative, CDS Senior Project Officer Tim Macuga has been invited to join the WiDS advisory committee as one of only two male representatives.

ii. **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement**

The Centre manager has arranged to meet with Jyi Lawnton, Acting Manager of the Oodgeroo Unit to launch the next round the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HDR Pathways Programs.

The Centre is also contributing to projects with Indigenous Australian organisations such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service Brisbane (ATSICHS) and the Institute of Urban Indigenous Health.

The Centre remains involved in the ARDC HASS Increasing Indigenous Research capability project.

4. Increasing capability in data science

i. **First and Second Byte Schemes**

The First and Second Byte Schemes exemplify the Centre's commitment to increasing capability in data science. A review of the outcomes and impacts from the previous rounds (2021 First Byte x 2 and 2021 Second Byte x 1) was undertaken.

We are currently undertaking a review of outcomes and impacts from the previous rounds of funding. Of the 12 responses findings include:

- 14 publications (6 published, 5 in review, 3 in draft).
- 1 RA enrolled in an MPhil with a co-funded scholarship from the project industry partner
- 1 RA enrolled in PhD
- 1 RA secured a postdoctoral appointment
- Collaborations across QUT which have led to 2 publications (with different groups)
- Five new cross-disciplinary applications for externally funded research projects.
- One project let to further research with Princess Alexandra Hospital resulting in \$100,00 award of funding.
- Project collaborators invited to talk at a number of conferences and meetings

The Centre is currently assessing applications it has received for the 2024 schemes.

ii. **Leadership**

There have been some changes to the Centre's core team this year due to some leaders stepping down due, the Core team now includes Centre Director Kerrie Mengersen, Centre Deputy Director Richi Nayak, Data for Discovery co-lead James McGree, Responsible Data Science co-lead Bernadette Hyland-Wood, Business and Engineering Systems co-lead Ashish Bhaskar and Sports Systems co-lead Divya Mehta.

The leadership of the Centres programs and domains is currently under review. Vincent Hoang has joined as co-lead for the Social Systems Domain. Recruitment is still underway for the Responsible Data Science co-Lead, Human Centred AI co-lead and Models and Algorithms co-lead.

iii. **Program and Domain activities**

The Centre has offered each research program and domain \$10K to support activities in 2023 however there has been little uptake of this due to workload commitments of leads and engagement in the groups. The Social Systems Domain hosted an guest seminar presented by Professor Scott Stern from MIT Sloan School of Management which was attended by approximately 50 people.

To assist with support of events, CDS has engaged a project officer to provide program and domain support for 1 day/week.

5. Centre Structure

Following the external review, the centre is reviewing the structure of its programs and domains.

Performance

The Centre is not required to provide an annual report for 2023. However following metrics for 2022-2023 have been recorded:

Centre for Data Science Project Income	2022		2023 (11/09/2023)	
	Awarded \$	Approved #	Awarded \$	Approved #
Competitive Research	\$3,361,253	14	\$878,135	6
Commercial Research	\$264,390	8	\$424,294	2
Major Research Initiative	\$1,682,812	15	\$2,017,773	9
Consultancy	\$0	0	\$0	0
International Development Project	\$0	0	\$0	0
Externally Funded Scholarship	\$336,000	6	\$209,000	5
QUT Fund Scheme	\$50,000	2	\$0	0
Grand Total	\$5,694,455	45	\$3,529,202	22

Centre for Data Science Outputs	2022 (at 19/09/22)			2023 (at 06/09/2023)		
	Number of Outputs	#Q1	% Q1	Number of Outputs	# Q1	% Q1
Book: Authored Research (QUT)	1	0	0%	0	1	0%
Book Chapter: Research (QUT)	3	0	0%	2	1	0%
Journal: Refereed Research Article (QUT)	193	157	81%	91	110	85%
Conference: Research Paper - Refereed Proceedings (QUT)	21	0	0%	8	7	0%
Research Report: for the Public Sector	4	0	0%	1	1	0%
Research Report: for Industry	0	0	--	0	0	--
Grand Total	120	120	78%	120	120	78%

Centre for Data Science HDR Completions	2020	2021	2022	2023 (Aug)
Doctorate by Research	20	14	17	12
Master of Philosophy	5	5	1	2
Grand Total	25	19	18	

Risk Management

Risks have been identified as being around either people or data.

1. People

People risks include health and wellbeing. Risk management includes supporting staff wellbeing and supporting employment by activities such as: Peers and Pizza, HDR Academy, Seminars on behaviours and code of conduct.

2. Data

Data risks are managed by data governance mechanisms, data ethics workshops teaching good behaviour and practice surrounding data.

Finance and Resourcing

1. Finance

A copy of the Centre's August end of month budget report is attached. The centre looks to expend the full \$1.5M in 2023.

Following the implementation of the new budget model the centre has been allocated a decreased expenditure of \$905,547 in 2024 which also incorporates the Centre Manager salary. This will leave approximately \$130K to cover the centre activities and initiatives in 2024 as the majority of allocation was previously committed to salary and scholarships.

2. Resourcing

i. **Administrative Appointments**

Tracy Kelly has been appointed as a Project Officer to support centre activities for 2 days per week with one day focused on supporting program and domain activities.

ii. **Academic Appointments**

No new academic appointments have been made since the last Steering Committee Meeting.

iii. **Centre Participants**

The Centre has reviewed its Centre Chief Investigators (CCIs) for 2023 and has reduced the number of CCIs

Academic Matters

1. Educational programs

Acknowledging the Faculty and University strategies around external education programs, CDS has recognised a persistent and growing call for advanced profession education courses in data science. To this end, a call out has gone to Centre Participants for interest in developing such courses.

Brand

The Centre Director is aware of the Centre's impact on the University's brand, reputation and marketing strategies. CDS leaders aim to abide by and enhance these strategies.

Initiatives and Engagement Activities

1. Engagement Activities

The Centre continues to hold a number of events through a combination of in-person, virtual and mixed modes.

i. **Data Science in the News**

In response to feedback we have reduced the number of webinars in 2023. In collaboration with the Queensland Academy of Arts and Sciences, we have held 3 webinars this year with the next on the Future of AI to be held on Friday 13 October 2023.

Recordings of the webinars are accessible via the Centre's [website](#).

ii. **Topics in Modern Data Science**

Led by Government Systems Domain Co-lead, Gentry White, this series commenced in May 2023 and is held on the last Wednesday of each month and is disseminated to colleagues at QUT and the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Recordings can be found [here](#).

iii. **Distinguished Visitors Seminar Series**

Since the previous meeting additional visitors have presented online and in person seminars. Professor Antonietta Mira delivered two talks when she visited QUT as part of the Centre's external review. Dr Mahdi Abolgasemi from UQ delivered an in person seminar in August and last week CDS Alumni Dr Raiha Browning presented in person.

Professor Benoit Liqueet will be delivering a seminar on Tuesday 10 October.

Recorded talks are available on the Centre's [website](#).

iv. **HDR Academy**

Postdoc researcher, Morenikeji (Deborah) Akinlotan has joined Richi Nayak in leading the HDR Academy this year.

Events that have taken place include a workshop on "How to communicate your research on social media" in May and recently a mini research symposium in early September. HDR students will be presenting their work at the upcoming CDS showcase on 17 October.

v. **Annual Centre Showcase**

The QUT Centre for Data Science will be having its annual research showcase on Monday 16 and Tuesday 17 October 2023. This event will include research highlights from each of our core programs and domains, as well as presentations from industry co-funded postdocs, EMCRs and HDR students.

Monday 16 October will include presentations by program and domain leads and mid career researchers who have receiving funding through the centre's Second Byte Scheme. Tuesday will be focussed on showcasing our early career researchers and HDR students including First Byte funding recipients, industry co-funded postdocs and conclude with a poster showcase in the Cube.

vi. **QUTBANDS**

We have continued to engage with the student group QUTBANDS to cross promote data science activities and opportunities.

vii. **Networks and Communications**

Twitter followers have grown from 1913 followers (as of 16 March 2023) to 2099 followers (as of 3 October 2023). [LinkedIn](#) followers have increased from 983 followers (16 March 2023) to 1034 followers (as of 3 October 2023).

News stories regarding the Centre are also posted on the CDS Website [here](#).

viii. **SMC Down Under: AMSI-AustMS Workshop on Sequential Monte Carlo**

The Centre supported the Sequential Monte Carlo workshop in collaboration with AMSI, SMRI and Aus-MS. This workshop was held at QUT on 10-13 July 2023.

2. **Research Initiatives**

i. **Scholarships**

The Centrally funded Centre Scholarship for 2024 has been advertised and will close on 26 November. Four applications have been received so far.

3. **Major Initiatives**

Research Potential Fund applications

- Sports
- AIMS

NOIs submitted for

- Sports
- Data Science in Society

Excolo competition

CoE proposal